THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
FEBRUARY 1912

The Widow in the Bye Street*

By John Masefield

PART I

DOWN Bye Street, in a little Shropshire town,
There lived a widow with her only son:
She had no wealth nor title to renown,
Nor any joyous hours, never one.
She rose from ragged mattress before sun
And stitched all day until her eyes were red,
And had to stitch, because her man was dead.

Sometimes she fell asleep, she stitched so hard,
Letting the linen fall upon the floor;
And hungry cats would steal in from the yard,
And mangy chickens pecked about the door
Craning their necks so ragged and so sore
To search the room for bread-crumbs, or for mouse,
But they got nothing in the widow's house.

Mostly she made her bread by hemming shrouds
For one rich undertaker in the High Street,
Who used to pray that folks might die in crowds
And that their friends might pay to let them lie sweet;
And when one died the widow in the Bye Street
Stitched night and day to give the worm his dole.
The dead were better dressed than that poor soul.

Her little son was all her life's delight,
For in his little features she could find
A glimpse of that dead husband out of sight,
Where out of sight is never out of mind.
And so she stitched till she was nearly blind,
Or till the tallow candle end was done,
To get a living for her little son.

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Her love for him being such she would not rest,
It was a want which ate her out and in,
Another hunger in her withered breast
Pressing her woman's bones against the skin.
To make him plump she starved her body thin.
And he, he ate the food, and never knew,
He laughed and played as little children do.

When there was little sickness in the place
She took what God would send, and what God sent
Never brought any colour to her face
Nor life into her footsteps when she went
Going, she trembled always withered and bent
For all went to her son, always the same,
He was first served whatever blessing came.

Sometimes she wandered out to gather sticks,
For it was bitter cold there when it snowed.
And she stole hay out of the farmer's ricks
For bands to wrap her feet in while she sewed,
And when her feet were warm and the grate glowed
She hugged her little son, her heart's desire,
With "Jimmy, ain't it snug beside the fire?"

So years went on till Jimmy was a lad
And went to work as poor lads have to do,
And then the widow's loving heart was glad
To know that all the pains she had gone through
And all the years of putting on the screw,
Down to the sharpest turn a mortal can,
Had borne their fruit, and made her child a man.

He got a job at working on the line
Tipping the earth down, trolly after truck,
From daylight till the evening, wet or fine,
With arms all red from wallowing in the muck,
And spitting, as the trolly tipped, for luck,
And singing "Binger" as he swung the pick
Because the red blood ran in him so quick.

So there was bacon then, at night, for supper
In Bye Street there, where he and mother stay;
And boots they had, not leaky in the upper,
And room rent ready on the settling day;
And beer for poor old mother, worn and grey,
And fire in frost; and in the widow's eyes
It seemed the Lord had made earth paradise.

And there they sat of evenings after dark
Singing their song of "Binger," he and she,
Her poor old cackle made the mongrels bark
And "You sing Binger, mother," carols he;
"By crimes, but that's a good song, that her be:"
And then they slept there in the room they shared,
And all the time fate had his end prepared.

One thing alone made life not perfect sweet:
The mother's daily fear of what would come
When woman and her lovely boy should meet,
When the new wife would break up the old home.
Fear of that unborn evil struck her dumb,
And when her darling and a woman met,
She shook and prayed, "Not her, O God; not yet."

"Not yet, dear God, my Jimmy took from me."
Then she would subtly question with her son.
"Not very handsome, I don't think her be?"
"God help the man who marries such an one."
Her red eyes peered to spy the mischief done.
She took great care to keep the girls away,
And all her trouble made him easier prey.

There was a woman out at Plaister's End,
Light of her body, fifty to the pound,
A copper coin for any man to spend,
Lovely to look on when the wits were drowned.
Her husband's skeleton was never found,
It lay among the rocks at Glydyr Mor
Where he drank poison finding her a whore.

She was not native there, for she belonged
Out Milford way, or Swansea; no one knew.
She had the piteous look of someone wronged,
"Anna," her name, a widow, last of Triw.
She had lived at Plaister's End a year or two;
At Callow's cottage, renting half an acre;
She was a hen-wife and a perfume-maker.

Secret she was; she lived in reputation;
But secret unseen threads went floating out:
Her smile, her voice, her face, were all temptation,
All subtle flies to trouble man the trout;
Man to entice, entrap, entangle, flout . . .
To take and spoil, and then to cast aside:
Gain without giving was the craft she plied.

And she complained, poor lonely widowed soul,
How no one cared, and men were rutters all;
While true love is an ever burning goal
Burning the brighter as the shadows fall.
And all love's dogs went hunting at the call,
Married or not she took them by the brain,
Sucked at their hearts and tossed them back again.

Like the straw fires lit on Saint John's Eve,
She burned and dwindled in her fickle heart;
For if she wept when Harry took his leave,
Her tears were lures to beckon Bob to start.
And if, while loving Bob, a tinker's cart
Came by, she opened window with a smile
And gave the tinker hints to wait a while.

She passed for pure; but, years before, in Wales,
Living at Mountain Ash with different men,
Her less discretion had inspired tales
Of certain things she did, and how, and when.
Those seven years of youth; we are frantic then.
She had been frantic in her years of youth,
The tales were not more evil than the truth.

She had two children as the fruits of trade
Though she drank bitter herbs to kill the curse,
Both of them sons, and one she overlaid,
The other one the parish had to nurse.
Now she grew plump with money in her purse,
Passing for pure a hundred miles, I guess,
From where her little son wore workhouse dress.

There with the Union boys he came and went,
A parish bastard fed on bread and tea,
Wearing a bright tin badge in furthest Gwent,
And no one knowing who his folk could be.
His mother never knew his new name: she,—
She touched the lust of those who served her turn,
And chief among her men was Shepherd Ern.

A moody, treacherous man of bawdy mind,
Married to that mild girl from Ercall Hill,
Whose gentle goodness made him more inclined
To hotter sauces sharper on the bill.
The new lust gives the lecher the new thrill,
The new wine scratches as it slips the throat,
The new flag is so bright by the old boat.

Ern was her man to buy her bread and meat,
Half of his weekly wage was hers to spend,
She used to mock "How is your wife, my sweet?"
Or wail, "O, Ernie, how is this to end?"
Or coo, "My Ernie is without a friend,
She cannot understand my precious life,"
And Ernie would go home and beat his wife.

So the four souls are ranged, the chess-board set,
The dark, invisible hand of secret Fate
Brought it to come to being that they met
After so many years of lying in wait.
While we least think it he prepares his Mate.
Mate, and the King's pawn played, it never ceases
Though all the earth is dust of taken pieces.

PART II

October Fair-time is the time for fun,
For all the street is hurdled into rows
Of pens of heifers blinking at the sun,
And Lemster sheep which pant and seem to doze,
And stalls of hardbake and galanty shows,
And cheapjacks smashing crocks, and trumpets blowing,
And the loud organ of the horses going.

There you can buy blue ribbons for your girl
Or take her in a swing-boat tossing high,
Or hold her fast when all the horses whirl
Round to the steam pipe whanging at the sky,
Or stand her cockshies at the cocoa-shy,
Or buy her brooches with her name in red,
Or Queen Victoria done in gingerbread.

Then there are rifle shots at tossing balls,
"And if you hit you get a good cigar,"
And strength-whackers for lads to lamm with mauls,
And Cheshire cheeses on a greasy spar.
The country folk flock in from near and far,
Women and men, like blowflies to the roast,
All love the fair; but Anna loved it most.

Anna was all agog to see the fair;
She made Ern promise to be there to meet her,
To arm her round to all the pleasures there,
And buy her ribbons for her neck, and treat her,
So that no woman at the fair should beat her
In having pleasure at a man's expense.
She planned to meet him at the chapel fence.

So Ernie went; and Jimmy took his mother,
Dressed in her finest with a Monmouth shawl,
And there was such a crowd she thought she'd smother,
And O, she loved a pep'mint above all.
Clash go the crockeries where the cheapjacks bawl,
Baa go the sheep, thud goes the waxwork's drum,
And Ernie cursed for Anna hadn't come.

He hunted for her up and down the place,
Raging and snapping like a working brew.
"If you're with someone else I'll smash his face,
And when I've done for him I'll go for you."
He bought no fairings as he'd vowed to do
For his poor little children back at home
Stuck at the glass "to see till father come."

Not finding her, he went into an inn,
Busy with ringing till and scratching matches.
Where thirsty drovers mingled stout with gin
And three or four Welsh herds were singing catches.
The swing-doors clattered, letting in in snatches
The noises of the fair, now low, now loud.
Ern called for beer and glowered at the crowd.

While he was glowering at his drinking there
In came the gipsy Bessie, hawking toys;
A bold-eyed strapping harlot with black hair,
One of the tribe which camped at Shepherd's Bois.
She lured him out of inn into the noise
Of the steam-organ where the horses spun,
And so the end of all things was begun.

Newness in lust, always the old in love.
"Put up your toys," he said, "and come along,
We'll have a turn of swing boats up above,
And see the murder when they strike the gong."
"Don't 'ee," she giggled. "My, but ain't you strong.
And where's your proper girl? You don't know me."
"I do." "You don't." "Why, then, I will," said he.

Anna was late because the cart which drove her
Called for her late (the horse had broke a trace),
She was all dressed and scented for her lover,
Her bright blue blouse had imitation lace,
The paint was red as roses on her face,
She hummed a song, because she thought to see
How envious all the other girls would be.

When she arrived and found her Ernie gone,
Her bitter heart thought, "This is how it is.
Keeping me waiting while the sports are on:
Promising faithful, too, and then to miss.
O, Ernie, won't I give it you for this."
And looking up she saw a couple cling,
Ern with his arm round Bessie in the swing.

Ern caught her eye and spat, and cut her dead,
Bessie laughed hardly, in the gipsy way.
Anna, though blind with fury, tossed her head,
Biting her lips until the red was grey,
For bitter moments given, bitter pay,
The time for payment comes, early or late,
No earthly debtor but accounts to Fate.

She turned aside, telling with bitter oaths
What Ern should suffer if he turned agen,
And there was Jimmy stripping off his clothes
Within a little ring of farming men.
"Now, Jimmy, put the old tup into pen."
His mother, watching, thought her heart would curdle,
To see Jim drag the old ram to the hurdle.

Then the ram butted and the game began,
Till Jimmy's muscles cracked and the ram grunted.
The good old wrestling game of Ram and Man,
At which none knows the hunter from the hunted.
"Come and see Jimmy have his belly bunted."
"Good tup. Good Jim. Good Jimmy. Sick him, Rover,
By dang, but Jimmy's got him fairly over."

Then there was clap of hands and Jimmy grinned
And took five silver shillings from his backers,
And said th' old tup had put him out of wind
Or else he'd take all comers at the Whackers.
And some made rude remarks of rams and knackers,
And mother shook to get her son alone,
So's to be sure he hadn't broke a bone.

None but the lucky man deserves the fair,
For lucky men have money and success,
Things that a whore is very glad to share,
Or dip, at least, a finger in the mess.
Anne, with her raddled cheeks and Sunday dress,
Smiled upon Jimmy, seeing him succeed,
As though to say, "You are a man, indeed."

All the great things of life are swiftly done,
Creation, death, and love the double gate.
However much we dawdle in the sun
We have to hurry at the touch of Fate;
When Life knocks at the door no one can wait,
When Death makes his arrest we have to go.
And so with Love, and Jimmy found it so.

Love, the sharp spear, went pricking to the bone,
In that one look, desire and bitter aching,
Longing to have that woman all alone
For her dear beauty's sake all else forsaking;
And sudden agony that set him shaking
Lest she, whose beauty made his heart's blood cruddle,
Should be another man's to kiss and cuddle.

She was beside him when he left the ring,
Her soft dress brushed against him as he passed her;
He thought her penny scent a sweeter thing
Than precious ointment out of alabaster;
Love, the mild servant, makes a drunken master.
She smiled, half sadly, out of thoughtful eyes,
And all the strong young man was easy prize.

She spoke, to take him, seeing him a sheep,
"How beautiful you wrastled with the ram,
It made me all go tremble just to peep,
I am that fond of wrastling, that I am.
Why, here's your mother, too. Good evening, ma'am.
I was just telling Jim how well he done,
How proud you must be of so fine a son."

Old mother blinked, while Jimmy hardly knew
Whether he knew the woman there or not;
But well he knew, if not, he wanted to,
Joy of her beauty ran in him so hot,
Old trembling mother by him was forgot,
While Anna searched the mother's face, to know
Whether she took her for a whore or no.

The woman's maxim, "Win the woman first,"
Made her be gracious to the withered thing.
"This being in crowds do give one such a thirst,
I wonder if they've tea going at 'The King'?
My throat's that dry my very tongue do cling,
Perhaps you'd take my arm, we'd wander up
(If you'd agree) and try and get a cup.

Come, ma'am, a cup of tea would do you good;
There's nothing like a nice hot cup of tea
After the crowd and all the time you've stood;
And 'The King's' strict, it isn't like 'The Key.'
Now, take my arm, my dear, and lean on me."
And Jimmy's mother, being nearly blind,
Took Anna's arm, and only thought her kind.

So off they set, with Anna talking to her,
How nice the tea would be after the crowd,
And mother thinking half the time she knew her,
And Jimmy's heart's blood ticking quick and loud,
And Death beside him knitting at his shroud,
And all the High Street babbling with the fair,
And white October clouds in the blue air.

So tea was made, and down they sat to drink;
O the pale beauty sitting at the board!
There is more death in women than we think,
There is much danger in the soul adored,
The white hands bring the poison and the cord;
Death has a lodge in lips as red as cherries,
Death has a mansion in the yew tree berries.

They sat there talking after tea was done,
And Jimmy blushed at Anna's sparkling looks,
And Anna flattered mother on her son,
Catching both fishes on her subtle hooks.
With twilight, tea and talk in ingle-nooks,
And music coming up from the dim street,
Mother had never known a fair so sweet.

Now cow-bells clink, for milking-time is come,
The drovers stack the hurdles into carts,
New masters drive the straying cattle home,
Many a young calf from his mother parts,
Hogs straggle back to sty by fits and starts;
The farmers take a last glass at the inns,
And now the frolic of the fair begins.

All of the side shows of the fair are lighted,
Flares and bright lights, and brassy cymbals clanging,
"Beginning now" and "Everyone's invited,"
Shatter the pauses of the organ's whanging,
The Oldest Show on Earth and the Last Hanging,
"The Murder in the Red Barn," with real blood,
The rifles crack, the Sally shy-sticks thud.

Anna walked slowly homewards with her prey,
Holding old tottering mother's weight upon her,
And pouring in sweet poison on the way
Of "Such a pleasure, ma'am, and such an honour,"
And "One's so safe with such a son to con her
Through all the noises and through all the press,
Boys daredn't squirt tormenters on her dress."

At mother's door they stop to say "Good-night."
And mother must go in to set the table.
Anna pretended that she felt a fright
To go alone through all the merry babel:
"My friends are waiting at 'The Cain and Abel,'
Just down the other side of Market Square,
It'd be a mercy if you'd set me there."

So Jimmy came, while mother went inside;
Anna has got her victim in her clutch.
Jimmy, all blushing, glad to be her guide,
Thrilled by her scent, and trembling at her touch.
She was all white and dark, and said not much;
She sighed, to hint that pleasure's grave was dug,
And smiled within to see him such a mug.

They passed the doctor's house among the trees,
She sighed so deep that Jimmy asked her why.
"I'm too unhappy upon nights like these,
When everyone has happiness but I!"
"Then, aren't you happy?" She appeared to cry,
Blinked with her eyes, and turned away her head:
"Not much; but some men understand," she said.

Her voice caught lightly on a broken note,
Jimmy half-dared but dared not touch her hand,
Yet all his blood went pumping in his throat
Beside the beauty he could understand,
And Death stopped knitting at the muffling band.
"The shroud is done," he muttered, "toe to chin."
He snapped the ends, and tucked his needles in.

Jimmy, half stammering, choked, "Has any man ——"
He stopped, she shook her head to answer "No."
"Then tell me." "No. P'raps some day, if I can.
It hurts to talk of some things ever so.
But you're so different. There, come, we must go.
None but unhappy women know how good
It is to meet a soul who's understood."

"No. Wait a moment. May I call you Anna?"
"Perhaps. There must be nearness 'twixt us two."
Love in her face hung out his bloody banner,
And all love's clanging trumpets shocked and blew
"When we got up to-day we never knew."
"I'm sure I didn't think, nor you did." "Never."
"And now this friendship's come to us for ever."

"Now, Anna, take my arm, dear." "Not to-night,
That must come later when we know our minds,
We must agree to keep this evening white,
We'll eat the fruit to-night and save the rinds."
And all the folk whose shadows darked the blinds,
And all the dancers whirling in the fair,
Were wretched worms to Jim and Anna there.

"How wonderful life is," said Anna, lowly.
"But it begins again with you for friend."
In the dim lamplight Jimmy thought her holy,
A lovely fragile thing for him to tend,
Grace beyond measure, beauty without end.
"Anna," he said; "Good-night. This is the door.
I never knew what people meant before."

"Good-night, my friend. Good-bye." "But oh, my sweet
The night's quite early yet, don't say good-bye,
Come just another short turn down the street,
The whole life's bubbling up for you and I.
Somehow I feel to-morrow we may die.
Come just as far as to the blacksmith's light."
But "No," said Anna; "Not to-night. Good-night."

All the tides triumph when the white moon fills.
Down in the race the toppling waters shout,
The breakers shake the bases of the hills,
There is a thundering where the streams go out,
And the wise shipman puts his ship about
Seeing the gathering of those waters wan,
But what when love makes high tide in a man?

Jimmy walked home with all his mind on fire,
One lovely face forever set in flame.
He shivered as he went, like tautened wire,
Surge after surge of shuddering in him came
And then swept out repeating one sweet name
"Anna, oh Anna," to the evening star.
Anna was sipping whiskey in the bar.

So back to home and mother Jimmy wandered,
Thinking of Plaister's End and Anna's lips.
He ate no supper worth the name, but pondered
On Plaister's End hedge, scarlet with ripe hips,
And of the lovely moon there in eclipse,
And how she must be shining in the house
Behind the hedge of those old dog-rose boughs.

Old mother cleared away. The clock struck eight.
"Why, boy, you've left your bacon, lawks a me,
So that's what comes of having tea so late,
Another time you'll go without your tea.
Your father liked his cup, too, didn't he,
Always 'another cup' he used to say,
He never went without on any day.

How nice the lady was and how she talked,
I've never had a nicer fair, not ever."
"She said she'd like to see us if we walked
To Plaister's End, beyond by Watersever.
Nice-looking woman, too, and that, and clever;
We might go round one evening, p'raps, we two;
Or I might go, if it's too far for you."

"No," said the mother, "we're not folk for that;
Meet at the fair and that, and there an end.
Rake out the fire and put out the cat,
These fairs are sinful, tempting folk to spend.
Of course she spoke polite and like a friend;
Of course she had to do, and so I let her,
But now it's done and past, so I forget her."

"I don't see why forget her. Why forget her?
She treat us kind. She weren't like everyone.
I never saw a woman I liked better,
And he's not easy pleased, my father's son.
So I'll go round some night when work is done."
"Now, Jim, my dear, trust mother, there's a dear."
"Well, so I do, but sometimes you're so queer."

She blinked at him out of her withered eyes
Below her lashless eyelids red and bleared.
Her months of sacrifice had won the prize,
Her Jim had come to what she always feared.
And yet she doubted, so she shook and peered
And begged her God not let a woman take
The lovely son whom she had starved to make.

Doubting, she stood the dishes in the rack,
"We'll ask her in some evening, then," she said,
"How nice her hair looked in the bit of black."
And still she peered from eyes all dim and red
To note at once if Jimmy drooped his head,
Or if his ears blushed when he heard her praised,
And Jimmy blushed and hung his head and gazed.

"This is the end," she thought. "This is the end.
I'll have to sew again for Mr. Jones,
Do hems when I can hardly see to mend,
And have the old ache in my marrow bones.
And when his wife's in child-bed, when she groans,
She'll send for me until the pains have ceased,
And give me leavings at the christening feast.

And sit aslant to eye me as I eat,
'You're only wanted here, ma'am, for to-day,
Just for the christ'ning party, for the treat,
Don't ever think I mean to let you stay;
Two's company, three's none, that's what I say.'
Life can be bitter to the very bone
When one is poor, and woman, and alone."

"Jimmy," she said, still doubting, "Come, my dear,
Let's have our 'Binger,' 'fore we go to bed,"
And then "The parson's dog," she cackled clear,
"Lep over stile," she sang, nodding her head.
"His name was little Binger." "Jim," she said,
"Binger, now, chorus" . . . Jimmy kicked the hob,
The sacrament of song died in a sob.

Jimmy went out into the night to think
Under the moon so steady in the blue.
The woman's beauty ran in him like drink,
The fear that men had loved her burnt him through;
The fear that even then another knew
All the deep mystery which women make
To hide the inner nothing made him shake.

"Anna, I love you, and I always shall."
He looked towards Plaister's End beyond Cot Hills.
A white star glimmered in the long canal,
A droning from the music came in thrills.
Love is a flame to burn out human wills,
Love is a flame to set the will on fire,
Love is a flame to cheat men into mire,

One of the three, we make Love what we choose.
But Jimmy did not know, he only thought
That Anna was too beautiful to lose,
That she was all the world and he was naught,
That it was sweet, though bitter, to be caught.
"Anna, I love you." Underneath the moon,
"I shall go mad unless I see you soon."

The fair's lights threw aloft a misty glow.
The organ whangs, the giddy horses reel,
The rifles cease, the folk begin to go,
The hands unclamp the swing boats from the wheel,
There is a smell of trodden orange peel;
The organ drones and dies, the horses stop,
And then the tent collapses from the top.

The fair is over, let the people troop,
The drunkards stagger homewards down the gutters,
The showmen heave in an excited group,
The poles tilt slowly down, the canvas flutters,
The mauls knock out the pins, the last flare sputters.
"Lower away." "Go easy." "Lower, lower."
"You've dang near knock my skull in. Loose it slower."

"Back in the horses." "Are the swing boats loaded?"
"All right to start." "Bill, where's the cushion gone?
The red one for the Queen?" "I think I stowed it."
"You think, you think. Lord, where's that cushion, John?"
"It's in that ditty box you're sitting on,
What more d'you want?" A concertina plays
Far off as wandering lovers go their ways.

Up the dim Bye Street to the market-place
The dead bones of the fair are borne in carts,
Horses and swing boats at a funeral pace
After triumphant hours quickening hearts;
A policeman eyes each waggon as it starts,
The drowsy showmen stumble half asleep,
One of them catcalls, having drunken deep.

So out, over the pass, into the plain,
And the dawn finds them filling empty cans
In some sweet-smelling dusty country lane,
Where a brook chatters over rusty pans.
The iron chimneys of the caravans
Smoke as they go. And now the fair has gone
To find a new pitch somewhere further on.

But as the fair moved out two lovers came,
Ernie and Bessie loitering out together;
Bessie with wild eyes, hungry as a flame,
Ern like a stallion tugging at a tether.
It was calm moonlight, and October weather,
So still, so lovely, as they topped the ridge.
They brushed by Jimmy standing on the bridge.

And, as they passed, they gravely eyed each other,
And the blood burned in each heart beating there;
And out into the Bye Street tottered mother,
Without her shawl, in the October air.
"Jimmy," she cried, "Jimmy." And Bessie's hair
Drooped on the instant over Ernie's face,
And the two lovers clung in an embrace.

"O, Ern." "My own, my Bessie." As they kissed
Jimmy was envious of the thing unknown.
So this was Love, the something he had missed,
Woman and man athirst, aflame, alone.
Envy went knocking at his marrow-bone,
And Anna's face swam up so dim, so fair,
Shining and sweet, with poppies in her hair.

PART III

After the fair, the gang began again.
Tipping the trolleys down the banks of earth.
The truck of stone clanks on the endless chain,
A clever pony guides it to its berth.
"Let go." It tips, the navvies shout for mirth
To see the pony step aside, so wise,
But Jimmy sighed, thinking of Anna's eyes.

And when he stopped his shovelling he looked
Over the junipers towards Plaister way,
The beauty of his darling had him hooked,
He had no heart for wrastling with the clay.
"O Lord Almighty, I must get away;
O Lord, I must. I must just see my flower,
Why, I could run there in the dinner hour."

The whistle on the pilot engine blew,
The men knocked off, and Jimmy slipped aside
Over the fence, over the bridge, and through,
And then ahead along the water-side,
Under the red-brick rail-bridge, arching wide,
Over the hedge, across the fields, and on;
The foreman asked: "Where's Jimmy Gurney gone?"

It is a mile and more to Plaister's End,
But Jimmy ran the short way by the stream,
And there was Anna's cottage at the bend,
With blue smoke on the chimney, faint as steam.
"God, she's at home," and up his heart a gleam
Leapt like a rocket on November nights,
And shattered slowly in a burst of lights.

Anna was singing at her kitchen fire,
She was surprised, and not well pleased to see
A sweating navvy, red with heat and mire,
Come to her door, whoever he might be.
But when she saw that it was Jimmy, she
Smiled at his eyes upon her, full of pain,
And thought, "But, still, he musn't come again.

People will talk; boys are such crazy things;
But he's a dear boy though he is so green."
So, hurriedly, she slipped her apron strings,
And dabbed her hair, and wiped her fingers clean,
And came to greet him languid as a queen,
Looking as sweet, as fair, as pure, as sad,
As when she drove her loving husband mad.

"Poor boy, she said, "Poor boy, how hot you are."
She laid a cool hand to his sweating face.
"How kind to come. Have you been running far?
I'm just going out; come up the road a pace.
O dear, these hens; they're all about the place."
So Jimmy shooed the hens at her command,
And got outside the gate as she had planned.

"Anna, my dear, I love you; love you, true;
I had to come—I don't know—I can't rest—
I lay awake all night, thinking of you.
Many must love you, but I love you best."
"Many have loved me, yes, dear," she confessed,
She smiled upon him with a tender pride,
"But my love ended when my husband died.

"Still, we'll be friends, dear friends, dear, tender friends;
Love with its fever's at an end for me.
Be by me gently now the fever ends,
Life is a lovelier thing than lovers see,
I'd like to trust a man, Jimmy," said she,
"May I trust you?" "Oh, Anna dear, my dear ——"
"Don't come so close," she said, "with people near.

Dear, don't be vexed; it's very sweet to find
One who will understand; but life is life,
And those who do not know are so unkind.
But you'll be by me, Jimmy, in the strife,
I love you though I cannot be your wife;
And now be off, before the whistle goes,
Or else you'll lose your quarter, goodness knows."

"When can I see you, Anna? Tell me, dear.
To-night? To-morrow? Shall I come to-night?"
"Jimmy, my friend, I cannot have you here;
But when I come to town perhaps we might.
Dear, you must go; no kissing; you can write,
And I'll arrange a meeting when I learn
What friends are doing" (meaning Shepherd Ern).

"Good-bye, my own." "Dear Jim, you understand.
If we were only free, dear, free to meet,
Dear, I would take you by your big, strong hand
And kiss your dear boy eyes so blue and sweet;
But my dead husband lies under the sheet,
Dead in my heart, dear, lovely, lonely one,
So, Jim, my dear, my loving days are done.

But though my heart is buried in his grave
Something might be—friendship and utter trust—
And you, my dear starved little Jim shall have
Flowers of friendship from my dead heart's dust;
Life would be sweet if men would never lust.
Why do you, Jimmy? Tell me sometime, dear,
Why men are always what we women fear.

Not now. Good-bye; we understand, we two,
And life, oh, Jim, how glorious life is;
This sunshine in my heart is due to you;
I was so sad, and life has given this.
I think 'I wish I had something of his,'
Do give me something, will you be so kind?
Something to keep you always in my mind."

"I will," he said. "Now go, or you'll be late."
He broke from her and ran, and never dreamt
That as she stood to watch him from the gate
Her heart was half amusement, half contempt,
Comparing Jim the squab, red and unkempt,
In sweaty corduroys, with Shepherd Ern.
She blew him kisses till he passed the turn.

The whistle blew before he reached the line;
The foreman asked him what the hell he meant,
Whether a duke had asked him out to dine,
Or if he thought the bag would pay his rent?
And Jim was fined before the foreman went.
But still his spirit glowed from Anna's words,
Cooed in the voice so like a singing bird's.

"O Anna, darling, you shall have a present;
I'd give you golden gems if I were rich,
And everything that's sweet and all that's pleasant."
He dropped his pick as though he had a stitch,
And stared tow'rds Plaister's End, past Bushe's Pitch.
O beauty, what I have to give I'll give,
All mine is yours, beloved, while I live."

All through the afternoon his pick was slacking,
His eyes were always turning west and south,
The foreman was inclined to send him packing,
But put it down to after fair-day drouth;
He looked at Jimmy with an ugly mouth,
And Jimmy slacked, and muttered in a moan,
"My love, my beautiful, my very own."

So she had loved. Another man had had her;
She had been his with passion in the night;
An agony of envy made him sadder,
Yet stabbed a pang of bitter-sweet delight—
O he would keep his image of her white.
The foreman cursed, stepped up, and asked him flat
What kind of gum tree he was gaping at.

It was Jim's custom, when the pay day came,
To take his weekly five and twenty shilling
Back in the little packet to his dame;
Not taking out a farthing for a filling,
Nor twopence for a pot, for he was willing
That she should have it all to save or spend.
But love makes many lovely customs end.

Next pay day came and Jimmy took the money,
But not to mother, for he meant to buy
A thirteen shilling locket for his honey,
Whatever bellies hungered and went dry,
A silver heart-shape with a ruby eye.
He bought the thing and paid the shopman's price,
And hurried off to make the sacrifice.

"Is it for me? You dear, dear generous boy.
How sweet of you. I'll wear it in my dress.
When you're beside me life is such a joy,
You bring the sun to solitariness."
She brushed his jacket with a light caress,
His arms went round her fast, she yielded meek;
He had the happiness to kiss her cheek.

"My dear, my dear." "My very dear, my Jim,
How very kind my Jimmy is to me;
I ache to think that some are harsh to him;
Not like my Jimmy, beautiful and free.
My darling boy, how lovely it would be
If all would trust as we two trust each other."
And Jimmy's heart grew hard against his mother.

She, poor old soul, was waiting in the gloom
For Jimmy's pay, that she could do the shopping.
The clock ticked out a solemn tale of doom;
Clogs on the bricks outside went clippa-clopping,
The owls were coming out and dew was dropping.
The bacon burnt, and Jimmy not yet home.
The clock was ticking dooms out like a gnome.

"What can have kept him that he doesn't come?
O God, they'd tell me if he'd come to hurt."
The unknown, unseen evil struck her numb,
She saw his body bloody in the dirt,
She saw the life blood pumping through the shirt,
She saw him tipsy in the navvies' booth,
She saw all forms of evil but the truth.

At last she hurried up the line to ask
If Jim were hurt or why he wasn't back.
She found the watchman wearing through his task;
Over the fire basket in his shack;
Behind, the new embankment rose up black.
"Gurney?" he said, "He'd got to see a friend."
"Where?" "I dunno. I think out Plaister's End."

Thanking the man, she tottered down the hill,
The long-feared fang had bitten to the bone.
The brook beside her talked as water will
That it was lonely singing all alone,
The night was lonely with the water's tone,
And she was lonely to the very marrow.
Love puts such bitter poison on Fate's arrow.

She went the long way to them by the mills,
She told herself that she must find her son.
The night was ominous of many ills;
The soughing larch-clump almost made her run,
Her boots hurt (she had got a stone in one)
And bitter beaks were tearing at her liver
That her boy's heart was turned from her forever.

She kept the lane, past Spindle's, past the Callows',
Her lips still muttering prayers against the worst,
And there were people coming from the sallows,
Along the wild duck patch by Beggar's Hurst.
Being in moonlight mother saw them first,
She saw them moving in the moonlight dim,
A woman with a sweet voice saying "Jim."

Trembling she grovelled down into the ditch,
They wandered past her pressing side to side.
"O Anna, my belov'd, if I were rich."
It was her son, and Anna's voice replied,
"Dear boy, dear beauty boy, my love and pride."
And he: "It's but a silver thing, but I
Will earn you better lockets by and bye."

"Dear boy, you mustn't. "But I mean to do."
"What was that funny sort of noise I heard?"
"Where?"
"In the hedge; a sort of sob or coo.
Listen. It's gone." "It may have been a bird."
Jim tossed a stone but mother never stirred.
She hugged the hedgerow, choking down her pain,
While the hot tears were blinding in her brain.

The two passed on, the withered woman rose,
For many minutes she could only shake,
Staring ahead with trembling little "Oh's,"
The noise a very frightened child might make.
"O God, dear God, don't let the woman take
My little son, God, not my little Jim.
O God, I'll have to starve if I lose him."

So back she trembled, nodding with her head,
Laughing and trembling in the bursts of tears,
Her ditch-filled boots both squelching in the tread,
Her shopping-bonnet sagging to her ears,
Her heart too dumb with brokenness for fears.
The nightmare whickering with the laugh of death
Could not have added terror to her breath.

She reached the house, and: "I'm all right," said she,
"I'll just take off my things; but I'm all right,
I'd be all right with just a cup of tea,
If I could only get this grate to light,
The paper's damp and Jimmy's late to-night;
'Belov'd, if I was rich,' was what he said,
Oh, Jim, I wish that God would kill me dead."

While she was blinking at the unlit grate,
Scratching the moistened match-heads off the wood,
She heard Jim coming, so she reached his plate,
And forked the over-frizzled scraps of food.
"You're late," she said, "and this yer isn't good,
Whatever makes you come in late like this?"
"I've been to Plaister's End, that's how it is."

M. "You've been to Plaister's End?"
J. "Yes."
M. "I've been staying
For money for the shopping ever so.
Down here we can't get victuals without paying,
There's no trust down the Bye Street, as you know,
And now it's dark and it's too late to go.
You've been to Plaister's End. What took you there?"
J. "The lady who was with us at the fair."

M. "The lady, eh? The lady?"
J. "Yes, the lady."
M. "You've been to see her?"
J. "Yes."

M. "What happened then?"
J. "I saw her."
M. "Yes. And what filth did she trade ye?
Or d' you expect your locket back agen?
I know the rotten ways of whores with men.
What did it cost ye?"
J. "What did what cost?"
M. "It.
Your devil's penny for the devil's bit."

J. "I don't know what you mean."
M. "Jimmy, my own.
Don't lie to mother, boy, for mother knows.
I know you and that lady to the bone,
And she's a whore, that thing you call a rose,
A whore who takes whatever male thing goes;
A harlot with the devil's skill to tell
The special key of each man's door to hell."

J. "She's not. She's nothing of the kind, I tell 'ee."
M. "You can't tell women like a woman can;
A beggar tells a lie to fill his belly,
A strumpet tells a lie to win a man,
Women were liars since the world began;
And she's a liar, branded in the eyes,
A rotten liar, who inspires lies."

J. "I say she's not."
M. "No, don't 'ee Jim, my dearie,
You've seen her often in the last few days,
She's given a love as makes you come in weary
To lie to me before going out to laze.
She's tempted you into the devil's ways,
She's robbing you, full fist, of what you earn,
In God's Name, what's she giving in return?"

J. "Her faith, my dear, and that's enough for me."
M. "Her faith. Her faith. Oh, Jimmy, listen, dear;
Love doesn't ask for faith, my son, not he;
He asks for life throughout the live-long year,
And life's a test for any plough to ere
Life tests a plough in meadows made of stones,
Love takes a toll of spirit, mind and bones.

I know a woman's portion when she loves,
It's hers to give, my darling, not to take;
It isn't lockets, dear, nor pairs of gloves,
It isn't marriage bells nor wedding cake,
It's up and cook, although the belly ache;
And bear the child, and up and work again,
And count a sick man's grumble worth the pain.

Will she do this, and fifty times as much?"
J. "No. I don't ask her."
M. "No. I warrant, no.
She's one to get a young fool in her clutch,
And you're a fool to let her trap you so.
She love you? She? O Jimmy, let her go;
I was so happy, dear, before she came,
And now I'm going to the grave in shame.

I bore you, Jimmy, in this very room.
For fifteen years I got you all you had,
You were my little son, made in my womb,
Left all to me, for God had took your dad,
You were a good son, doing all I bad,
Until this strumpet came from God knows where,
And now you lie, and I am in despair.

Jimmy, I won't say more. I know you think
That I don't know, being just a withered old,
With chaps all fallen in and eyes that blink,
And hands that tremble so they cannot hold.
A bag of bones to put in churchyard mould,
A red-eyed hag beside your evening star."
And Jimmy gulped, and thought "By God, you are."

"Well, if I am, my dear, I don't pretend.
I got my eyes red, Jimmy, making you.
My dear, before our love time's at an end
Think just a minute what it is you do.
If this were right, my dear, you'd tell me true;
You don't, and so it's wrong; you lie; and she
Lies too, or else you wouldn't lie to me.

Women and men have only got one way
And that way's marriage; other ways are lust.
If you must marry this one, then you may
If you'll not drop her."

J. "No."
M. "I say you must.
Or bring my hairs with sorrow to the dust.
Marry your whore, you'll pay, and there an end.
My God, you shall not have a whore for friend.

By God, you shall not, not while I'm alive.
Never, so help me God, shall that thing be.
If she's a woman fit to touch she'll wive,
If not she's whore, and she shall deal with me.
And may God's blessed mercy help us see
And may He make my Jimmy count the cost,
My little boy who's lost, as I am lost."

People in love cannot be won by kindness,
And opposition makes them feel like martyrs.
When folk are crazy with a drunken blindness,
It's best to flog them with each other's garters,
And have the flogging done by Shropshire carters,
Born under Ercall where the white stones lie;
Ercall that smells of honey in July.

Jimmy said nothing in reply, but thought
That mother was an old, hard jealous thing.
"I'll love my girl through good and ill report,
I shall be true whatever grief it bring."
And in his heart he heard the death-bell ring
For mother's death, and thought what it would be
To bury her in churchyard and be free.

He saw the narrow grave under the wall,
Home without mother nagging at his dear,
And Anna there with him at evenfall,
Bidding him dry his eyes and be of cheer.
"The death that took poor mother brings me near,
Nearer than we have ever been before,
Near as the dead one came, but dearer, more."

"Good-night, my son," said mother. "Night," he said.
He dabbed her brow wi's lips and blew the light,
She lay quite silent crying on the bed,
Stirring no limb, but crying through the night.
He slept, convinced that he was Anna's knight.
And when he went to work he left behind
Money for mother crying herself blind.

After that night he came to Anna's call,
He was a fly in Anna's subtle weavings,
Mother had no more share in him at all;
All that the mother had was Anna's leavings.
There were more lies, more lockets, more deceivings,
Taunts from the proud old woman, lies from him,
And Anna's coo of "Cruel. Leave her, Jim."

Also the foreman spoke: "You make me sick,
You come-day-go-day-God-send-plenty-beer.
You put less mizzle on your bit of Dick,
Or get your time, I'll have no slackers here,
I've had my eye on you too long, my dear."
And Jimmy pondered while the man attacked,
"I'd see her all day long if I were sacked."

And trembling mother thought, "I'll go to see'r.
She'd give me back my boy if she were told
Just what he is to me, my pretty dear:
She wouldn't leave me starving in the cold,
Like what I am." But she was weak and old.
She thought, "But if I ast her, I'm afraid
He'd hate me ever after," so she stayed.

PART IV

Bessie, the gipsy, got with child by Ern,
She joined her tribe again at Shepherd's Meen,
In that old quarry overgrown with fern,
Where goats are tethered on the patch of green.
There she reflected on the fool she'd been,
And plaited kipes and waited for the bastard,
And thought that love was glorious while it lasted.

And Ern the moody man went moody home,
To that most gentle girl from Ercall Hill,
And bade her take a heed now he had come,
Or else, by cripes, he'd put her through the mill.
He didn't want her love, he'd had his fill,
Thank you, of her, the bread and butter sack.
And Anna heard that Shepherd Ern was back.

"Back. And I'll have him back to me," she muttered,
"This lovesick boy of twenty, green as grass,
Has made me wonder if my brains are buttered,
He, and his lockets, and his love, the ass.
I don't know why he comes. Alas! alas!
God knows I want no love; but every sun
I bolt my doors on some poor loving one.

It breaks my heart to turn them out of doors,
I hear them crying to me in the rain;
One, with a white face, curses, one implores,
"Anna, for God's sake, let me in again,
Anna, belov'd, I cannot bear the pain."
Like hoovey sheep bleating outside a fold,
"Anna, belov'd, I'm in the wind and cold."

I want no men. I'm weary to the soul
Of men like moths about a candle flame,
Of men like flies about a sugar bowl,
Acting alike, and all wanting the same,
My dreamed of swirl of passion never came,
No man has given me the love I dreamed,
But in the best of each one something gleamed.

If my dear darling were alive, but he . . .
He was the same; he didn't understand.
The eyes of that dead child are haunting me,
I only turned the blanket with my hand.
It didn't hurt, he died as I had planned.
A little skinny creature, weak and red;
It looked so peaceful after it was dead.

I have been all alone, in spite of all.
Never a light to help me place my feet:
I have had many a pain and many a fall.
Life's a long headache in a noisy street,
Love at the budding looks so very sweet,
Men put such bright disguises on their lust,
And then it all goes crumble into dust.

Jimmy the same, dear, lovely Jimmy, too,
He goes the self-same way the others went:
I shall bring sorrow to those eyes of blue.
He asks the love I'm sure I never meant.
Am I to blame? And all his money spent!
Men make this shutting doors such cruel pain.
O, Ern, I want you in my life again."

THE WIDOW IN THE BYE STREET

On Sunday afternoons the lovers walk
Arm within arm, dressed in their Sunday best,
The man with the blue necktie sucks a stalk,
The woman answers when she is addressed.
On quiet country stiles they sit to rest,
And after fifty years of wear and tear
They think how beautiful their courtships were.

Jimmy and Anna met to walk together
The Sunday after Shepherd Ern returned;
And Anna's hat was lovely with a feather
Bought and dyed blue with money Jimmy earned.
They walked towards Callows Farm, and Anna yearned:
"Dear boy," she said, "This road is dull to-day,
Suppose we turn and walk the other way."

They turned, she sighed. "What makes you sigh?" he asked.
"Thinking," she said, "thinking and grieving, too.
Perhaps some wicked woman will come masked
Into your life, my dear, to ruin you.
And trusting every woman as you do
It might mean death to love and be deceived;
You'd take it hard, I thought, and so I grieved."

"Dear one, dear Anna." "O my lovely boy
Life is all golden to the finger tips.
What will be must be: but to-day's a joy.
Reach me that lovely branch of scarlet hips."
He reached and gave; she put it to her lips.
"And here," she said, "we come to Plaister Turns,"
And then she chose the road to Shepherd Ern's.

As the deft angler, when the fishes rise,
Flicks on the broadening circle over each
The delicatest touch of dropping flies,
Then pulls more line and whips a longer reach,
Longing to feel the rod bend, the reel screech,
And the quick comrade net the monster out,
So Anna played the fly over her trout.

Twice she passed, thrice, she with the boy beside her,
A lovely fly, hooked for a human heart,
She passed his little gate, while Jimmy eyed her,
Feeling her beauty tear his soul apart:
Then did the great trout rise, the great pike dart,
The gate went clack, a man came up the hill,
The lucky strike had hooked him through the gill.

Her breath comes quick, her tired beauty glows,
She would not look behind, she looked ahead.
It seemed to Jimmy she was like a rose,
A golden white rose faintly flushed with red.
Her eyes danced quicker at the approaching tread,
Her finger nails dug sharp into her palm.
She yearned to Jimmy's shoulder, and kept calm.

"Evening," said Shepherd Ern. She turned and eyed him,
Cold and surprised, but interested too,
To see how much he felt the hook inside him,
And how much he surmised, and Jimmy knew,
And if her beauty still could make him do
The love tricks he had gambolled in the past.
A glow shot through her that her fish was grassed.

"Evening," she said. "Good evening." Jimmy felt
Jealous and angry at the shepherd's tone;
He longed to hit the fellow's nose a belt,
He wanted his beloved his alone.
A fellow's girl should be a fellow's own.
Ern gave the lad a glance and turned to Anna,
Jim might have been in China by his manner.

"Still walking out?" "As you are." "I'll be bound."
"Can you talk gipsy yet, or plait a kipe?"
"I'll teach you if I can when I come round."
"And when will that be?" "When the time is ripe."
And Jimmy longed to hit the man a swipe
Under the chin to knock him out of time,
But Anna stayed: she still had twigs to lime.

"Come, Anna, come, my dear," he muttered low.
She frowned, and blinked and spoke again to Ern.
"I hear the gipsy has a row to hoe."
"The more you hear," he said, "the less you'll learn."
"We've just come out," she said, "to take a turn;
Suppose you come along: the more the merrier."
"All right," he said, "but how about the terrier."

He cocked an eye at Jimmy. "Does he bite?"
Jimmy blushed scarlet. "He's a dear," said she.
Ern walked a step, "Will you be in to-night?"
She shook her head, "I doubt if that may be.
Jim, here's a friend who wants to talk to me,
So will you go and come another day?"
"By crimes, I won't!" said Jimmy, "I shall stay."

"I thought he bit," said Ern, and Anna smiled,
And Jimmy saw the smile and watched her face
While all the jealous devils made him wild;
A third in love is always out of place;
And then her gentle body full of grace
Leaned to him sweetly as she tossed her head,
"Perhaps we two'll be getting on," she said.

They walked, but Jimmy turned to watch the third.
"I'm here, not you," he said; the shepherd grinned:
Anna was smiling sweet without a word;
She got the scarlet berry branch unpinned.
"It's cold," she said, "this evening, in the wind."
A quick glance shewed that Jimmy didn't mind her,
She beckoned with the berry branch behind her,

Then dropped it gently on the broken stones,
Preoccupied, unheeding, walking straight,
Saying "You jealous boy," in even tones,
Looking so beautiful, so delicate,
Being so very sweet: but at her gate
She felt her shoe unlaced and looked to know
If Ern had taken up the sprig or no.

He had, she smiled. "Anna," said Jimmy sadly,
"That man's not fit to be a friend of yourn,
He's nobbut just an oaf; I love you madly,
And hearing you speak kind to'm made me burn.
Who is he then?" She answered "Shepherd Ern,
A pleasant man, an old, old friend of mine."
"By cripes, then, Anna, drop him, he's a swine."

"Jimmy," she said, "you must have faith in me,
Faith's all the battle in a love like ours.
You must believe, my darling, don't you see
That life to have its sweets must have its sours.
Love isn't always two souls picking flowers.
You must have faith. I give you all I can.
What, can't I say 'Good evening' to a man?"

"Yes," he replied, "But not a man like him."
"Why not a man like him?" she said, "What next?"
By this they'd reached her cottage in the dim,
Among the daisies that the cold had kexed.
"Because I say. Now, Anna, don't be vexed."
"I'm more than vexed," she said, "with words like these.
'You say,' indeed. How dare you. Leave me, please."

"Anna, my Anna." "Leave me." She was cold,
Proud and imperious with a lifting lip,
Blazing within, but outwardly controlled;
He had a colt's first instant of the whip.
The long lash curled to cut a second strip.
"You to presume to teach. Of course, I know
You're mother's Sunday scholar, aren't you? Go."

She slammed the door behind her, clutching skirts.
"Anna." He heard her bedroom latches thud.
He learned at last how bitterly love hurts;
He longed to cut her throat and see her blood,
To stamp her blinking eyeballs into mud.
"Anna, by God!" Love's many torments make
That tune soon change to "Dear, for Jesus' sake."

He beat the door for her. She never stirred,
But primming bitter lips before her glass;
Admired her hat as though she hadn't heard,
And tried her front hair parted, and in mass.
She heard her lover's hasty footsteps pass.
"He's gone," she thought. She crouched below the pane,
And heard him cursing as he tramped the lane.

Rage ran in Jimmy as he tramped the night;
Rage, strongly mingled with a youth's disgust
At finding a beloved woman light,
And all her precious beauty dirty dust;
A tinsel-varnish gilded over lust.
Nothing but that. He sat him down to rage,
Beside the stream whose waters never age.

Plashing, it slithered down the tiny fall
To eddy wrinkles in the trembling pool
With that light voice whose music cannot pall,
Always the note of solace, flute-like, cool.
And when hot-headed man has been a fool,
He could not do a wiser thing than go
To that dim pool where purple teazels grow.

He glowered there until suspicion came,
Suspicion, anger's bastard, with mean tongue,
To mutter to him till his heart was flame,
And every fibre of his soul was wrung,
That even then Ern and his Anna clung
Mouth against mouth in passionate embrace.
There was no peace for Jimmy in the place.

Raging he hurried back to learn the truth.
The little swinging wicket glimmered white,
The chimney jagged the skyline like a tooth,
Bells came in swoons for it was Sunday night.
The garden was all dark, but there was light
Up in the little room where Anna slept:
The hot blood beat his brain; he crept, he crept.

Clutching himself to hear, clutching to know,
Along the path, rustling with withered leaves,
Up to the apple, too decayed to blow,
Which crooked a palsied finger at the eaves.
And up the lichened trunk his body heaves.
Dust blinded him, twigs snapped, the branches shook,
He leaned along a mossy bough to look.

Nothing at first, except a guttering candle
Shaking amazing shadows on the ceiling,
Then Anna's voice upon a bar of "Randal,
Where have you been?" and voice and music reeling,
Trembling, as though she sang with flooding feeling.
The singing stopped midway upon the stair,
Then Anna showed in white with loosened hair.

Her back was towards him, and she stood awhile,
Like a wild creature tossing back her mane,
And then her head went back, he saw a smile
On the half face half turned towards the pane;
Her eyes closed, and her arms went out again.
Jim gritted teeth, and called upon his Maker,
She drooped into a man's arms there to take her.

Agony first, sharp, sudden, like a knife,
Then down the tree to batter at the door;
"Open there. Let me in. I'll have your life.
You Jezebel of hell, you painted whore,
Talk about faith, I'll give you faith galore."
The window creaked, a jug of water came
Over his head and neck with certain aim.

"Clear out," said Ern; "I'm here, not you, to-night,
Clear out. We whip young puppies when they yap."
"If you're a man," said Jim, "Come down and fight,
I'll put a stopper on your ugly chap."
"Go home," said Ern; "Go home and get your pap.
To kennel, pup, and bid your mother bake
Some soothing syrup in your puppy cake."

There was a dibble sticking in the bed,
Jim wrenched it out and swung it swiftly round,
And sent it flying at the shepherd's head:
"I'll give you puppy-cake. Take that, you hound."
The broken glass went clinking to the ground,
The dibble balanced, checked, and followed flat.
"My God," said Ern, "I'll give you hell for that."

He flung the door ajar with "Now, my pup—
Hold up the candle, Anna—now, we'll see."
"By crimes, come on," said Jimmy; "Put them up.
Come, put them up, you coward, here I be."
And Jim, eleven stone, what chance had he
Against fourteen? but what he could he did;
Ern swung his right: "That settles you, my kid."

Jimmy went down and out: "The kid," said Ern.
"A kid, a sucking puppy; hold the light."
And Anna smiled: "It gave me such a turn,
You look so splendid, Ernie, when you fight."
She looked at Jim with: "Ern, is he all right?"
"He's coming to." She shuddered, "Pah, the brute,
What things he said;" she stirred him with her foot.

"You go inside," said Ern, "and bolt the door,
I'll deal with him." She went and Jimmy stood.
"Now, pup," said Ern, "don't come round here no more.
I'm here, not you, let that be understood.
I tell you frankly, pup, for your own good."
"Give me my hat," said Jim. He passed the gate,
And as he tottered off he called, "You wait."

"Thanks, I don't have to," Shepherd Ern replied;
"You'll do whatever waiting's being done."
The door closed gently as he went inside,
The bolts jarred in the channels one by one.
"I'll give you throwing bats about, my son.
Anna." "My dear?" "Where are you?" "Come and find."
The light went out, the windows stared out blind,

Blind as blind eyes forever seeing dark.
And in the dim the lovers went upstairs,
Her eyes fast closed, the shepherd's burning stark,
His lips entangled in her straying hairs,
Breath coming short as in a convert's prayers,
Her stealthy face all drowsy in the dim
And full of shudders as she yearned to him.

Jim crossed the water, cursing in his tears,
"By cripes, you wait. My God, he's with her now
And all her hair pulled down over her ears;
Loving the blaggard like a filthy sow,
I saw her kiss him from the apple bough.
They say a whore is always full of wiles,
O God, how sweet her eyes are when she smiles.

Curse her and curse her. No, my God, she's sweet,
It's all a helly nightmare. I shall wake.
If it were all a dream I'd kiss her feet,
I wish it were a dream for Jesus' sake.
One thing: I bet I made his guzzle ache,
I cop it fair before he sent me down,
I'll cop him yet some evening on the crown.

O God, O God, what pretty ways she had,
He's kissing all her skin, so white and soft.
She's kissing back. I think I'm going mad.
Like rutting rattens in the apple loft.
She held that light she carried high aloft
Full in my eyes for him to hit me by,
I had the light all dazzling in my eye.

She had her dress all clutched up to her shoulder,
And all her naked arm was all one gleam.
It's going to freeze to-night, it's turning colder,
I wish there was more water in the stream,
I'd drownd myself. Perhaps its all a dream,
And bye and bye I'll wake and find it stuff,
By crimes, the pain I suffer's real enough."

About two hundred yards from Gunder Loss
He stopped to shudder, leaning on the gate,
He bit the touchwood underneath the moss;
"Rotten, like her," he muttered in his hate;
He spat it out again with "But, you wait,
We'll see again, before to-morrow's past,
In this life he laughs longest who laughs last."

All through the night the stream ran to the sea,
The different water always saying the same,
Cat-like, and then a tinkle, never glee,
A lonely little child alone in shame.
An otter snapped a thorn twig when he came,
It drifted down, it passed the Hazel Mill,
It passed the Springs; but Jimmy stayed there still.

Over the pointed hill-top came the light
Out of the mists on Ercall came the sun,
Red like a huntsman halloing after night,
Blowing a horn to rouse up everyone;
Through many glittering cities he had run,
Splashing the wind vanes on the dewy roofs
With golden sparks struck by his horses' hoofs.

The watchman rose, rubbing his rusty eyes,
He stirred the pot of cocoa for his mate;
The fireman watched his head of power rise.
"What time?" he asked.
"You haven't long to wait."
"Now, is it time?"
"Yes. Let her ripple." Straight
The whistle shrieked its message, "Up to work!
Up, or be fined a quarter if you shirk."

Hearing the whistle, Jimmy raised his head,
"The warning call, and me in Sunday clo'es;
I'd better go; I've time. The sun looks red,
I feel so stiff I'm very nearly froze."
So over brook and through the fields he goes,
And up the line among the navvies' smiles,
"Young Jimmy Gurney's been upon the tiles."

The second whistle blew and work began,
Jimmy worked too, not knowing what he did,
He tripped and stumbled like a drunken man;
He muddled all, whatever he was bid,
The foreman cursed, "Good God, what ails the kid?
Hi! Gurney. You. We'll have you crocking soon,
You take a lie down till the afternoon."

"I won't," he answered. "Why the devil should I?
I'm here, I mean to work. I do my piece,
Or would do if a man could, but how could I
When you come nagging round and never cease?
Well, take the job and give me my release,
I want the sack, now give it, there's my pick;
Give me the sack." The sack was given quick.

PART V

Dully he got his time-check from the keeper.
"Curse her," he said; "and that's the end of whores"—
He stumbled drunkenly across a sleeper—
"Give all you have and get kicked out a-doors."
He cashed his time-check at the station stores.
"Bett'ring yourself, I hope, Jim," said the master;
"That's it," said Jim; "and so I will do, blast her."

Beyond the bridge, a sharp turn to the right
Leads to "The Bull and Boar," the carters' rest;
An inn so hidden it is out of sight
To anyone not coming from the west,
The high embankment hides it with its crest.
Far up above the Chester trains go by,
The drinkers see them sweep against the sky.

Canal men used it when the barges came,
The navvies used it when the line was making;
The pigeons strut and sidle, ruffling, tame,
The chuckling brook in front sets shadows shaking.
Cider and beer for thirsty workers' slaking,
A quiet house; like all that God controls,
It is Fate's instrument on human souls.

Thither Jim turned. "And now I'll drink," he said.
"I'll drink and drink—I never did before—
I'll drink and drink until I'm mad or dead,
For that's what comes of meddling with a whore."
He called for liquor at "The Bull and Boar";
Moody he drank; the woman asked him why:
"Have you had trouble?" "No," he said, "I'm dry.

Dry and burnt up, so give's another drink;
That's better, that's much better, that's the sort."
And then he sang, so that he should not think,
His Binger-Bopper song, but cut it short.
His wits were working like a brewer's wort
Until among them came the vision gleaming
Of Ern with bloody nose and Anna screaming.

"That's what I'll do," he muttered; "knock him out,
And kick his face in with a running jump.
I'll not have dazzled eyes this second bout,
And she can wash the fragments under pump."
It was his ace; but Death had played a trump.
Death the blind beggar chuckled, nodding dumb,
"My game; the shroud is ready, Jimmy—come."

Meanwhile, the mother, waiting for her child,
Had tottered out a dozen times to search.
"Jimmy," she said, "you'll drive your mother wild;
Your father's name's too good a name to smirch,
Come home, my dear, she'll leave you in the lurch;
He was so good, my little Jim, so clever;
He never stop a night away, not ever.

He never slept a night away till now,
Never, not once, in all the time he's been.
It's the Lord's will, they say, and we must bow,
But O it's like a knife, it cuts so keen!
He'll work in's Sunday clothes, it'll be seen,
And then they'll laugh, and say "It isn't strange;
He slept with her, and so he couldn't change."

"Perhaps," she thought, "I'm wrong; perhaps he's dead;
Killed himself like; folk do in love, they say.
He never tells what passes in his head,
And he's been looking late so old and grey.
A railway train has cut his head away,
Like the poor hare we found at Maylow's shack.
O God have pity, bring my darling back!"

All the high stars went sweeping through the sky,
The sun made all the orient clean, clear gold,
"O blessed God," she prayed, "do let me die,
Or bring my wand'ring lamb back into fold.
The whistle's gone, and all the bacon's cold;
I must know somehow if he's on the line,
He could have bacon sandwich when he dine."

She cut the bread, and started, short of breath,
Up the canal now draining for the rail;
A poor old woman pitted against death,
Bringing her pennyworth of love for bail.
Wisdom, beauty, and love may not avail.
She was too late. "Yes, he was here; oh, yes.
He chucked his job and went." "Where?" "Home, I guess."

"Home, but he hasn't been home." "Well, he went.
Perhaps you missed him, mother." "Or perhaps
He took the field path yonder through the bent.
He very likely done that, don't he, chaps?"
The speaker tested both his trouser straps
And took his pick. "He's in the town," he said.
"He'll be all right, after a bit in bed."

She trembled down the high embankment's ridge,
Glad, though too late; not yet too late, indeed.
For forty yards away, beyond the bridge,
Jimmy still drank, the devil still sowed seed.
"A bit in bed," she thought, "is what I need.
I'll go to 'Bull and Boar' and rest a bit,
They've got a bench outside; they'd let me sit."

Even as two soldiers on a fortress wall
See the bright fire streak of a coming shell,
Catch breath, and wonder "Which way will it fall?
To you? to me? or will it all be well?"
Ev'n so stood life and death, and could not tell
Whether she'd go to th' inn and find her son,
Or take the field and let the doom be done.

"No, not the inn," she thought. "People would talk.
I couldn't in the open daytime; no.
I'll just sit here upon the timber balk,
I'll rest for just a minute and then go."
Resting, her old tired heart began to glow,
Glowed and gave thanks, and thought itself in clover,
"He's lost his job, so now she'll throw him over."

Sitting, she saw the rustling thistle-kex,
The picks flash bright above, the trolleys tip.
The bridge-stone shining, full of silver specks,
And three swift children running down the dip.
A Stoke Saint Michael carter cracked his whip,
The water in the runway made its din.
She half heard singing coming from the inn.

She turned, and left the inn, and took the path
And "Brother Life, you lose," said Brother Death,
"Even as the Lord of all appointed hath
In this great miracle of blood and breath."
He doeth all things well as the book saith,
He bids the changing stars fulfil their turn,
His hand is on us when we least discern.

Slowly she tottered, stopping with the stitch,
Catching her breath, "O lawks, a dear, a dear.
How the poor tubings in my heart do twitch,
It hurts like the rheumatics very near."
And every painful footstep drew her clear
From that young life she bore with so much pain.
She never had him to herself again.

Out of the inn came Jimmy, red with drink,
Crying: "I'll show her. Wait a bit. I'll show her.
You wait a bit. I'm not the kid you think.
I'm Jimmy Gurney, champion tupper-thrower,
When I get done with her you'll never know her,
Nor him you won't. Out of my way, you fowls,
Or else I'll rip the red things off your jowls."

He went across the fields to Plaister's End.
There was a lot of water in the brook,
Sun and white cloud and weather on the mend
For any man with any eyes to look.
He found old Callow's plough-bat, which he took,
"My innings now, my pretty dear," said he.
"You wait a bit. I'll show you. Now you'll see."

Her chimney smoke was blowing blue and faint,
The wise duck shook a tail across the pool,
The blacksmith's shanty smelt of burning paint,
Four newly-tired cartwheels hung to cool.
He had loved the place when under Anna's rule.
Now he clenched teeth and flung aside the gate,
There at the door they stood. He grinned. "Now wait."

Ern had just brought her in a wired hare,
She stood beside him stroking down the fur.
"O, Ern, poor thing, look how its eyes do stare,"
' It isn't *it*," he answered. "It's a her."
She stroked the breast and plucked away a bur,
She kissed the pads, and leapt back with a shout,
"My God, he's got the spudder. Ern. Look out."

Ern clenched his fists. Too late. He felt no pain,
Only incredible haste in something swift,
A shock that made the sky black on his brain,
Then stillness, while a little cloud went drift.
The weight upon his thigh bones wouldn't lift;
Then poultry in a long procession came,
Grey-legged, doing the goose-step, eyes like flame.

Grey-legged old cocks and hens sedate in age,
Marching with jerks as though they moved on springs,
With sidelong hate in round eyes red with rage,
And shouldered muskets clipped by jealous wings,
Then an array of horns and stupid things:
Sheep on a hill with harebells, hare for dinner.
"Hare." A slow darkness covered up the sinner.

"But little time is right hand fain of blow."
Only a second changes life to death;
Hate ends before the pulses cease to go,
There is great power in the stop of breath.
There's too great truth in what the dumb thing saith,
Hate never goes so far as that, nor can.
"I am what life becomes. D'you hate me, man?"

Hate with his babbling instant, red and damning,
Passed with his instant, having drunken red.
"You've killed him."
"No, I've not, he's only shamming.
Get up."
"He can't."
"O God, he isn't dead."
"O God."
"Here. Get a basin. Bathe his head.
Ernie, for God's sake, what are you playing at?
I only give him one like, with the bat."

Man cannot call the brimming instant back;
Time's an affair of instants spun to days;
If man must make an instant gold, or black,
Let him, he may, but Time must go his ways.
Life may be duller for an instant's blaze.
Life's an affair of instants spun to years,
Instants are only cause of all these tears.

Then Anna screamed aloud. "Help. Murder. Murder."
"By God, it is," he said. "Through you, you slut."
Backing, she screamed, until the blacksmith heard her.
"Hurry," they cried, "the woman's throat's being cut."
Jim had his coat off by the water butt.
"He might come to," he said, "with wine or soup.
I only hit him once, like, with the scoop."

"Splash water on him, chaps. I only meant
To hit him just a clip, like, nothing more.
There. Look. He isn't dead, his eyelids went.
And he went down. O God, his head's all tore.
I've washed and washed: it's all one gob of gore.
He don't look dead to you? What? Nor to you?
Not kill, the clip I give him, couldn't do."

"God send; he looks damn bad," the blacksmith said.
"Py Cot," his mate said, "she wass altogether;
She hass an illness look of peing ted."
"Here. Get a glass," the smith said, "and a feather."
"Wass you at fightings or at playings whether?"
"Here, get a glass and feather. Quick's the word."
The glass was clear. The feather never stirred.

"By God, I'm sorry, Jim. That settles it."
"By God. I've killed him then."
"The doctor might."
"Try, if you like; but that's a nasty hit."
"Doctor's gone by. He won't be back till night."
"Py Cot, the feather was not looking right."
"By Jesus, chaps, I never meant to kill 'un.
Only to bat. I'll go to p'leece and tell 'un.

O Ern, for God's sake speak, for God's sake speak."
No answer followed: Ern had done with dust,
"The p'leece is best," the smith said, "or a beak.
I'll come along; and so the lady must.
Evans, you bring the lady, will you just?
Tell 'em just how how it come, lad. Come your ways;
And Joe, you watch the body where it lays."

They walked to town, Jim on the blacksmith's arm.
Jimmy was crying like a child, and saying,
"I never meant to do him any harm."
His teeth went clack, like bones at mummers playing,
And then he trembled hard and broke out praying,
"God help my poor old mother. If he's dead,
I've brought her my last wages home," he said.

He trod his last free journey down the street;
Treading the middle road, and seeing both sides,
The school, the inns, the butchers selling meat,
The busy market where the town divides.
Then past the tanpits full of stinking hides,
And up the lane to death, as weak as pith.
"By God, I hate this, Jimmy," said the smith.

PART VI

Anna in black, the judge in scarlet robes,
A fuss of lawyers' people coming, going,
The windows shut, the gas alight in globes,
Evening outside, and pleasant weather blowing.
"They'll hang him?" "I suppose so; there's no knowing.'
"A pretty piece, the woman, ain't she, Harry?
He killed the fellow she was going to marry."

"She give her piece to counsel pretty clear."
"Ah, that she did, and when she stop she smiled."
"She's had a-many men, that pretty dear;
She's drove a-many pretty fellows wild."
"More silly idiots they to be beguiled."
"Well, I don't know." "Well, I do. See her eyes?
Mystery, eh? A woman's mystery's lies."

"Perhaps." "No p'raps about it, that's the truth.
I know these women; they're a rotten lot."
"You didn't use to think so in your youth."
"No; but I'm wiser now, and not so hot.
Married or buried, *I* say, wives or shot,
These unmanned, unattached Maries and Susans
Make life no better than a proper nuisance."

"Well, I don't know." "Well, if you don't you will."
"I look on women as as good as men."
"Now, that's the kind of talk that makes me ill.
When have they been as good? I ask you when?"
"Always they have." "They haven't. Now and then
P'raps one or two was neither hen nor fury."
"One for your mother, that. Here comes the jury."

Guilty. Thumbs down. No hope. The judge passed
sentence:
"A frantic passionate youth, unfit for life,
A fitting time afforded for repentance,
Then certain justice with a pitiless knife.
For her who, but for him, had been a wife,
Pity. For her who bore him, pity. (Cheers.)
The jury were exempt for seven years."

All bowed; the Judge passed to the robing-room,
Dismissed his clerks, disrobed, and knelt and prayed
As was his custom after passing doom,
Doom upon life, upon the thing not made.
"O God, who made us out of dust, and laid
Thee in us bright, to lead us to the truth,
O God, have pity upon this poor youth.

Show him Thy grace, O God, before he die;
Shine in his heart; have mercy upon me,
Who deal the laws men make to travel by
Under the sun upon the path to Thee;
O God Thou knowest I'm as blind as he,
As blind, as frantic, not so single, worse,
Only Thy pity spared me from the curse.

Thy pity, and Thy mercy, God, did save,
Thy bounteous gifts, not any grace of mine,
From all the pitfalls leading to the grave,
From all the death-feasts with the husks and swine.
God, who hast given me all things, now make shine
Bright in this sinner's heart that he may see.
God, take this poor boy's spirit back to Thee."

Then trembling with his hands, for he was old,
He went to meet his college friend, the Dean,
The loiterers watched him as his carriage rolled.
"There goes the Judge," said one, and one was keen:
"Hanging that wretched boy, that's where he's been."
A policeman spat, two lawyers talked statistics,
"'Crime passionel' in Agricultural Districts."

"They'd oughtn't hang a boy": but one said "Stuff.
This sentimental talk is rotten, rotten.
The law's the law and not half strict enough,
Forgers and murderers are misbegotten,
Let them be hanged and let them be forgotten.
A rotten fool should have a rotten end;
Mend them, you say? The rotten never mend."

And one "Not mend? The rotten not, perhaps.
The rotting would; so would the just infected.
A week in quod has ruined lots of chaps
Who'd all got good in them till prison wrecked it."
And one, "Society must be protected."
"He's just a kid. She trapped him." "No, she didden."
"He'll be reprieved." "He mid be and he midden."

So the talk went; and Anna took the train,
Too sad for tears, and pale; a lady spoke
Asking if she were ill or suffering pain?
"Neither," she said; but sorrow made her choke,
"I'm only sick because my heart is broke.
My man, the man I was engaged to, died.
I had to see the man who killed him, tried.

He's to be hanged. Only a boy. My friend.
I thought him just a boy; I didn't know.
And Ern was killed, and now the boy's to end,
And all because he thought he loved me so."
"My dear," the lady said; and Anna, "Oh.
It's very hard to bear the ills men make,
He thought he loved, and it was all mistake."

"My dear," the lady said; "you poor, poor woman,
Have you no friends to go to?" "I'm alone.
I've parents living, but they're both inhuman,
And none can cure what pierces to the bone.
I'll have to leave and go where I'm not known.
Begin my life again." Her friend said "Yes.
Certainly that. But leave me your address:

For I might hear of something; I'll enquire,
Perhaps the boy might be reprieved or pardoned.
Couldn't we ask the rector or the squire
To write and ask the Judge? He can't be hardened.
What do you do? Is it housework? Have you gardened?
Your hands are very white and soft to touch."
"Lately I've not had heart for doing much."

So the talk passes as the train descends
Into the vale, and halts, and starts to climb;
Heartless is ever swift at making friends,
Heartless plucks honey from the evil time,
The heartless soul makes many bells to chime:
Joybells and deathbells, wedding bells and dirges,
Heartless is one of God's appointed scourges.

Jimmy was taken down into a cell,
He did not need a hand, he made no fuss.
The men were kind "for what the kid done . . . well
The same might come to any one of us."
They brought him bits of cake at tea time: thus
The love that fashioned all in human ken,
Works in the marvellous hearts of simple men.

And in the nights (they watched him night and day)
They told him bits of stories through the grating,
Of how the game went at the football play,
And how the rooks outside had started mating.
And all the time they knew the rope was waiting,
And every evening friend would say to friend,
"I hope we've not to drag him at the end."

And poor old mother came to see her son,
"The Lord has gave," she said, "The Lord has took;
I loved you very dear, my darling one,
And now there's none but God where we can look.
We've got God's promise written in His Book,
He will not fail; but oh, it do seem hard."
She hired a room outside the prison yard.

"Where did you get the money for the room?
And how are you living, mother; how'll you live?"
"It's what I'd saved to put me in the tomb,
I'll want no tomb but what the parish give."
"Mother, I lied to you that time, O forgive,
I brought home half my wages, half I spent,
And you went short that week to pay the rent.

I went to see'r, I spent my money on her,
And you who bore me paid the cost in pain.
You went without to buy the clothes upon her:
A hat, a locket, and a silver chain.
O mother dear, if all might be again,
Only from last October, you and me;
O mother dear, how different it would be.

We were so happy in the room together,
Singing at 'Binger Bopper,' weren't us, just?
And going a-hopping in the summer weather,
And all the hedges covered white with dust,
And blackberries, and that, and traveller's trust.
I thought her wronged, and true, and sweet, and wise,
The devil takes sweet shapes when he tells lies.

Mother, my dear, will you forgive your son?"
"God knows I do, Jim, I forgive you dear;
You didn't know, and couldn't, what you done.
God pity all poor people suffering here,
And may His mercy shine upon us clear,
And may we have His Holy Word for mark,
To lead us to His Kingdom through the dark."

"Amen." "Amen," said Jimmy; then they kissed.
The warders watched, the little larks were singing,
A plough team jangled, turning at the rist;
Beyond, the mild cathedral bells were ringing,
The elm-tree rooks were cawing at the springing:
O beauty of the time when winter's done,
And all the fields are laughing at the sun!

"I s'pose they've brought the line beyond the Knapp?"
"Ah, and beyond the Barcle, so they say."
"Hearing the rooks begin reminds a chap.
Look queer, the street will, with the lock away;
O God, I'll never see it." "Let us pray.
Don't think of that, but think," the mother said,
"Of men going on long after we are dead.

Red helpless little things will come to birth,
And hear the whistles going down the line,
And grow up strong and go about the earth,
And have much happier times than yours and mine;
And some day one of them will get a sign,
And talk to folk, and put an end to sin,
And then God's blessed kingdom will begin.

God dropped a spark down into everyone,
And if we find and fan it to a blaze
It'll spring up and glow like—like the sun,
And light the wandering out of stony ways.
God warms his hands at man's heart when he prays,
And light of prayer is spreading heart to heart;
It'll light all where now it lights a part.

And God who gave His mercies takes His mercies,
And God who gives beginning gives the end.
I dread my death; but it's the end of curses,
A rest for broken things too broke to mend.
O Captain Christ, our blessed Lord and Friend,
We are two wandered sinners in the mire,
Burn our dead hearts with love out of Thy fire.

And when thy death comes, Master, let us bear it
As of Thy will, however hard to go;
Thy Cross is infinite for us to share it,
Thy help is infinite for us to know.
And when the long trumpets of the Judgment blow
May our poor souls be glad and meet agen,
And rest in Thee." "Say, 'Amen,' Jim." "Amen."

* * * *

There was a group outside the prison gate,
Waiting to hear them ring the passing bell,
Waiting as empty people always wait
For the strong toxic of another's hell.
And mother stood there, too, not seeing well,
Praying through tears to let His will be done,
And not to hide His mercy from her son.

Talk in the little group was passing quick.
"It's nothing now to what it was, to watch."
"Poor wretched kid, I bet he's feeling sick."
"Eh? What d'you say, chaps? Someone got a match?"
"They draw a bolt and drop you down a hatch
And break your neck, whereas they used to strangle
In the old times, when you could see them dangle."

Some one said, "Off hats" when the bell began.
Mother was whimpering now upon her knees.
A broken ringing like a beaten pan
It sent the sparrows wavering to the trees.
The wall-top grasses whickered in the breeze,
The broken ringing clanged, clattered and clanged
As though men's bees were swarming, not men hanged.

Now certain Justice with the pitiless knife.
The white sick chaplain snuffling at the nose.
"I am the resurrection and the life."
The bell still clangs, the small procession goes,
The prison warders ready ranged in rows.
"Now, Gurney, come, my dear; it's time," they said.
And ninety seconds later he was dead.

Some of life's sad ones are too strong to die,
Grief doesn't kill them as it kills the weak,
Sorrow is not for those who sit and cry
Lapped in the love of turning t'other cheek,
But for the noble souls austere and bleak
Who have had the bitter dose and drained the cup
And wait for Death face fronted, standing up.

As the last man upon the sinking ship,
Seeing the brine creep brightly on the deck,
Hearing aloft the slatting topsails rip,
Ripping to rags among the topmast's wreck,
Yet hoists the new red ensign without speck,
That she, so fair, may sink with colours flying,
So the old widowed mother kept from dying.

She tottered home, back to the little room,
It was all over for her, but for life;
She drew the blinds, and trembled in the gloom;
"I sat here thus when I was wedded wife;
Sorrow sometimes, and joy; but always strife.
Struggle to live except just at the last,
O God, I thank Thee for the mercies past.

Harry, my man, when we were courting; eh . . .
The April morning up the Cony-gree.
How grand he looked upon our wedding day.
"I wish we'd had the bells," he said to me;
And we'd the moon that evening, I and he,
And dew come wet, oh, I remember how,
And we come home to where I'm sitting now.

And he lay dead here, and his son was born here;
He never saw his son, his little Jim.
And now I'm all alone here, left to mourn here,
And there are all his clothes, but never him.
He's down under the prison in the dim,
With quicklime working on him to the bone,
The flesh I made with many and many a groan.

Oh, how his little face come, with bright hair,
Dear little face. We made this room so snug;
He sit beside me in his little chair,
I give him real tea sometimes in his mug.
He liked the velvet in the patchwork rug.
He used to stroke it, did my pretty son,
He called it Bunny, little Jimmy done.

And then he ran so, he was strong at running,
Always a strong one, like his dad at that.
In summertimes I done my sewing sunning,
And he'd be sprawling, playing with the cat.
And neighbours brought their knitting out to chat
Till five o'clock; he had his tea at five;
How sweet life was when Jimmy was alive."

• • • •

Darkness and midnight, and the midnight chimes.
Another four-and-twenty hours begin,
Darkness again, and many, many times,
The alternating light and darkness spin
Until the face so thin is still more thin,
Gazing each earthly evening wet or fine
For Jimmy coming from work along the line.

Over her head the Chester wires hum,
Under the bridge the rocking engines flash.
"He's very late this evening, but he'll come
And bring his little packet full of cash
(Always he does) and supper's cracker hash,
That is his favourite food excepting bacon.
They say my boy was hanged; but they're mistaken."

And sometimes she will walk the cindery mile,
Singing, as she and Jimmy used to do,
Singing "The parson's dog lep over a stile,"
Along the path where water lilies grew.
The stars are placid on the evening's blue,
Burning like eyes so calm, so unafraid,
On all that God has given and man has made.

Burning they watch, and mothlike owls come out,
The redbreast warbles shrilly once and stops;
The homing cowman gives his dog a shout,
The lamps are lighted in the village shops.
Silence; the last bird passes; in the copse
The hazels cross the moon, a nightjar spins,
Dew wets the grass, the nightingale begins.

Singing her crazy song the mother goes,
Singing as though her heart were full of peace,
Moths knock the petals from the dropping rose,
Stars make the glimmering pool a golden fleece,
The moon droops west, but still she does not cease,
The little mice peep out to hear her sing,
Until the inn-man's cockerel shakes his wing.

And in the sunny dawns of hot Julys,
The labourers going to meadow see her there.
Rubbing the sleep out of their heavy eyes,
They lean upon the parapet to stare;
They see her plaiting basil in her hair,
Basil, the dark red wound-wort, cops of clover,
The blue self-heal and golden Jacks of Dover.

Dully they watch her, then they turn to go
To that high Shropshire upland of late hay;
Her singing lingers with them as they mow,
And many times they try it, now grave, now gay,
Till, with full throat, over the hills away,
They lift it clear; oh, very clear it towers
Mixed with the swish of many falling flowers.

Among my Books*

By Frederic Harrison

PART III

POETS THAT I LOVE.

When our thoughts turn from the immortal books of the ancient world to those of the modern, we begin with Dante as the father of European literature, just as all ancient literature sought its ancestry in Homer. To me, Dante has ever been the source and fountain of my love of great imaginative thought—

Tu se'lo mio maestro e il mio autore—

My study of Dante and my love of him and his world of art and thought is of no recent date. It was exactly sixty years ago when I boldly began the study of Italian with Dante for first text book, being then an undergraduate of Wadham College. And my first master was Count Aurelio Saffi, in 1849, one of the three triumvirs with Mazzini, who, maintained the heroic defence of Rome, so well described by Mr. George Trevelyan in his *Life of Garibaldi*. When, in 1856, I was a student for the Bar in London, I continued my lessons in Dante under Campanella, of Milan, stern Republican of the Revolution, another colleague of Mazzini.

Thus it comes that my interest in the language, history, literature and aspirations of Italy are all concentrated in Dante, and are idealised in his poem, and in memory they are coloured by my youthful enthusiasm for the Mazzinian vision of a great *Risorgimento*. When I was living in my father's house, my evening devotions included, perhaps even not seldom consisted of, a canto of the *Commedia*, which, having a fine baritone voice, I would often chant in my bedroom before I went to sleep. A dear old grandmother who lay on the same floor, and was disturbed in mind rather

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than in body by these vespers, warned my parents that at Oxford I had been "perverted" to Rome, for I used to say my prayers in Latin.

In the 'fifties we had to hammer out our Dante with but few of the translations, commentaries, and "aids" which in this last half century have been poured out in floods, Italian, French, German, English, American, and Greek. I had that excellent prose version of the *Inferno*, by John A. Carlyle, brother to Thomas, a version which Froude, in 1884, declared to be "the best that exists." Of course, too, we had Cary, which perhaps is still the most useful of the verse translations; but I cannot go with Ruskin's wild outburst that it is grander than *Paradise Lost*. Although men of far higher poetic gifts than Cary have since tried their hand at verse translations, the difficulties are so great, and any attempt to convey the liquid vowels of the *terza rim* into our English endings are so truly impracticable that doubt if Cary for verse will easily be superseded.

But my counsel is to begin Italian literature with the *Inferno*, and to use a prose translation. I did this, just as at nine years I began the study of Greek with the *Iliad*. Dante is very difficult indeed to master the sense, but not so, simply for the words. Thus:—

Fecemi la divina potestate,
La somma sapienza e il primo amore—

is a very hard saying to accept, and has been the crux of Theology ever since the time of Thomas Aquinas. But no one who can construe a Latin *Delectus* can mistake the words of Dante, which are almost plain Latin. With a quite literal translation on the opposite page, the *Inferno* is not at all difficult in language. The admirably faithful and Biblical prose of John Carlyle in the *Inferno* has been continued for the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* in the same excellent way by Arthur J. Butler, of Trinity College, Cambridge, who has now completed the entire poem (1880-1892). And then for those who have leisure for still more elaborate explanation and need more special help, there are the learned *Readings in Dante*, by the Hon. W. Warren Vernon, in six volumes, to which he has devoted more than twenty-five years of his life. To master the whole product of this great hereditary Dantist is to acquire an education in mediæval history.

In order to begin the study of Dante, I say, use a prose

translation, of which there are many in these days. But the prose version which helped me most was that of the Abbé Lamennais, in rather antique French (Paris, 3 vols., 8vo., 1856). The close relation of old Italian and early French makes the transposition perfectly natural and obvious:—

Per me si va tra la perduta gente—.
Par moi l'on va chez la race perdue—.

seem to me mere variations of one language. Using this version, and with J. Carlyle and Cary, I worked away on the text, which I interleaved, and therein recorded my personal reflections on the ethical and religious problems raised by the poem. In those days, when I was still in my twenties, I ought to have been engrossed in Law Reports; so, perhaps, if Dante ruined my professional prospects, he did me good as a man.

But now the young Dantist has a plethora of books to turn for help—the massive learning of Dr. Scartassini, in four volumes, the noble essay of Dean Church, the studies of J. Addington Symonds, of Dr. E. Moore, of W. F. Rossetti, of Charles Eliot Norton, of Dante G. Rossetti, of Walter Pater, of Philip Wicksteed and Paget Toynbee, and the various translations of Longfellow, Plumptre, Dr. Shadwell, and I know not how many more. I have them all, and try them all in turn. And then there is that invaluable edition of Dr. Moore—Dante's entire *Works*, verse and prose, Latin and Italian, which in 430 pages gives in a single volume every word of the poet that we possess; and in the wonderful Oxford India paper this is a volume hardly larger than a collection of sonnets. As a younger man I used to carry about the Pickering print of the *Commedia*, in diamond type, a miniature volume which would go in a waistcoat pocket, and could be used on a railway journey. I had the entire set of these *bijou* Pickerings, classics, Shakespeares and all, and I believe I could use them still. But when I reached old age my wife insisted on my giving them away—a sacrifice I still deplore. And they say to-day that women are a downtrodden sex, unless they can vote for Parliament. But really the thin Oxford (Moore's) Dante ought to be small enough for anyone. And nothing can be handier and daintier than the three volumes of the "Temple Classics," edited by Israel Gollancz, with translations and notes by Philip Wicksteed, Thomas Okey, H. Oelsner, and Mabel Lawrence. To be ignorant of Dante now is a mark of neglected education.

After all, the essential for Dante is to read him through —not in choice episodes as they did fifty or a hundred years ago, but all together, as an encyclopædia of knowledge and of meditation. The chief object is to try to realise what the greatest mind of the Middle Ages had to tell to the modern world that was about to be born. Englishmen will not admit that Dante was the greatest of all poets, nor will Greek scholars admit it. But no one doubts that Dante was the mightiest philosopher who ever used poetry as his instrument of thought, and also the most profound poet who ever idealised the whole cycle of previous history and learning. I remember a curious instance of the difficulty of mastering the full meaning of the *Commedia*. I was reading the *Purgatorio* with Campanella, himself a man of letters, when, having finished one canto, I proposed to go on to the next. "No!" said my scrupulous teacher; "I have not made a study yet of the canto you propose to read. No Italian scholar would pretend to make Dante clear to a student until he had given his mind to it, and had refreshed his memory of all the historic allusions."

In Dante there is far more of philosophy, of religion, of history, than in any other poet since the world began, ancient or modern. In the grand passage with which Dean Church opens his *Essay*:—

> "The *Divina Commedia* is one of the landmarks of history. More than a magnificent poem, more than the beginning of a language and the opening of a national literature, more than the inspirer of art, and the glory of a great people, it is one of those rare and solemn monuments of the mind's power."

And so say all of us to whom Dante is the new Bible.

Not only have I used almost all the editions, translations, and commentaries of Dante published in the last sixty years, but I wrote a *Life* of the poet for our *Calendar of Great Men*. I have seen the original drawings in the imperial edition at Sudbury Park, on which Lord Vernon lavished his time and fortune. I have seen the portrait in the Bargello and the reputed house of Dante in the Via San Martino. And in 1859, under the guidance of Count Cappi, friend of Byron and the Gambas, I made a pilgrimage to the Tomb of the poet at Ravenna. So that I am proud to be able to say—*sono anche io Dantista*.

Devoted from youth to Dante as I am, I have never given much thought to Petrarch, Ariosto, nor Tasso, beyond taking them up occasionally in tempting editions. I have always had at hand the beautiful Pickering print of *Orlando*

Furioso, edited by Antonio Panizzi, 1834; but in spite of the exhortations of Dr. Bridges, and the known admiration of Comte, who classed Ariosto with Homer and Dante for enjoyment, I never got further than a canto or two. I have the translations of Sir John Harington and of Hoole, but they only prove the impossibility of putting the charm of Italian verse into English poetry. And when I take up the English *Jerusalem* of Fairfax or of Hoole, it almost turns me against Tasso himself. I am quite alive to the lovely music of the poet, and I did justice to it when I wrote the *Life* of Tasso for the *Calendar*. But I said "his honeyed cadences are apt to pall upon the masculine taste." Much as I love chivalric ballads and romantic adventures, the *literary epic* is an exotic which I fail to enjoy. If I am ever tempted to open my Tasso it is in the sumptuous antique copy I have—a folio in the original parchment binding—printed in double *pica* type, 32 lines to a tall folio page, with tremendous illustrations in contemporary plates. Its title page runs thus: *Gerusalemme Liberata—Con le figure di Giambatista Piazzetta—Venezia, 1745—Giambatista Albrizzi.* But the trouble with these mighty folios is that one needs a cathedral lectern to hold them.

A word or two for Boccaccio, for I am not about to restrict the term *poetry* to verse. Poetry includes all *making* of imaginative creations in any form. And the *Decamerone* is the *Humana Commedia* of Italian prose, its type and prime source. I have always read my Boccaccio in the exquisite edition printed by Pickering, London, 3 vols., 1825, and edited by Ugo Foscolo. I do not believe that in 85 years British typographers have produced a volume more pleasant to the eye. After hundreds of rivals in all the languages of Europe, the Florentine tales of the Seven Ladies and their three Courtiers retain their inimitable freshness, grace, and charm. The spontaneous birth of a prose style of limpid ease in the fourteenth century in Italy, centuries before organic prose was written in Spain, France, England, or Germany, is one of the problems of history and a landmark of modern prose literature.

As to Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, I can just take it up in a curious old edition of his *Works*, 3 vols., 1725, that I have in the original binding, with quaint woodcuts and tail-pieces, rather to see how slowly in Europe a prose style developed than for any interest in the interminable and tangled tales which strangely delighted his sister and the

contemporaries of Spenser and Shakespeare. Philip Sidney as a hero yes! but as a prose romancer he is more than I can stand.

If we are to have old-world romances, let us take it in the form of *Fabliaux ou Contes du xii^e^ et du xiii^e^ siecle.* I do not mean in the scholarly texts of Montaiglon and Raynaud, 6 vols., 1872-1890. I have no time to get up old French, and I am no antiquarian linguist; and I am too lazy to get familiar even with Chaucer, the great poet of *Fabliaux.* No! I read the prose version, translation, and adaptation of the old songs by Le Grand d'Aussy, 1779, which I have in four delightful volumes with the contemporary binding and plates. The notes of Le Grand are an essential part of the book, which is a picture of the feudal, troubadour, popular side of the Middle Ages, as the *Divine Comedy* and Saint Bernard's *Letters* are of the spiritual and intellectual side. Here is the *esprit Gaulois* in all its audacious profanity, its nakedness, its *diablerie*—prophetic of Rabelais, Voltaire, and Diderot. How democratic, how revolutionary, how anti-clerical are these bold jests. Was there ever a madder bit of wit than the *Villain qui gagna Paradis en plaignant*, or that of the *Jongleur en Enfer*, or the *L'Anneau nuptial de la Vierge?* We hardly conceive such Voltairean ribaldry as possible in the Ages of Faith; but in spite of all the monkeries, and sermons, and penances, and excommunications of Holy Church, throughout all the centuries between Claudian and Diderot, there was never wanting an audience, both popular and scholarly, for the freest wit and the wildest cynicism of the ancient as well as of the modern world.

And the *Fabliaux*, which Comte, for historical reasons, included in his *Positivist Library*, alongside of the four great poets of the Italian Renascence, certainly have their serious side. Le Grand did his work excellently well. I can read the famous tale of Patient Griselda in his version even after reading Boccaccio's rather overpraised concluding piece in *Giornata Decima, Novella X.* And to my taste, the *Aucassin et Nicolette*, as told by Le Grand in vol. ii., p. 180, is as good as any other form of the immortal tale. And as to grim tragedy I know nothing better than *La Châtelaine de Vergy* in vol. ii., p. 196, which is as fierce and redolent of troubadour love, jealousy, and revenge as anything in poetry. For my part, I would read these romances of feudal times and the Courts of Love in prose rather than in verse. The quaint naïveté of old French prose is far more real and living than

any kind of verse, which the exigencies of metre must make more or less artificial.

My love for the romance of the Spanish Cid Campeador dates from childhood, when in the fine old *Penny Magazine* of the 'forties I enjoyed Sir George Dennis' Chronicle and Ballads of the national hero—

Rodericus, mio Cid semper vocatus.

Good old "Penny Mag"! My boyish ideas of chivalry were nurtured on its "Cid," its Nibelunglied, and English Ballads with spirited woodcuts. The true way to read the *Poem of the Cid* is in the fine quarto volume by Damas Hinard, Paris, 1858, made for the Empress Eugénie, having the text of the whole poem, 3,740 lines, with literal French version on the opposite page and annotations. I have also a French translation by St. Albin, 1865, and a pretty and handy version, part verse, part prose, by John Ormsby, 1879. This little volume is by the author of the splendid English *Don Quixote*, in 4 vols., 1885. Ormsby's neat handbook must lead a reader to the entire poem in the original. Old poems can be translated only in prose. And I always hold the "Poem of the Cid," perhaps composed not very much later than the hero who was a contemporary of William the Conqueror, to be the earliest of the national romances of Europe and to be one of the most genuine pictures of early Feudal life that has come down to us. Its native realism is far more true than the modern adaptations of Spanish Ballads; and Ormsby is as safe a guide as we can have. How effective is the fanciful and no doubt late heraldic shield from the tomb—the crossed swords Colade and Tizon, the field *vert*, enclosed in the chain of sentence, and in the centre hangs the Greek cross which held a fragment of the true cross. The historic Cid was a compound of all three sons of our own Conqueror, with a dash of Cœur de Lion, and a figure more worthy of belief than the superfine hero of the later poets. After the grim old *Poem*, Lockhart's Cid Ballads read like words for a modern song, and Corneille's Cid smacks of C. Perrault's *Contes*.

A favourite mediæval book of mine was Froissart's *Chronicles*, translated by Thomas Johnes, 2 vols., 4to, 1839, with abundant illustrations, occasionally copied, but too often "adapted," from contemporary illuminated MSS. I think that, in my schooldays, I read through these huge

quartos of 1,500 pages more than once, and the pictures, badly "faked" as they were, remain in my eyes to this hour. My prize essay on the Age of Edward III., I know, was largely drawn from these fascinating volumes. I have the Monstrelet of the same series, also by Thomas Johnes, 2 vols., 4to, 1840. It never enchanted me as did the Froissart. When we get into the fifteenth century the colour and the spell of the Middle Ages have gone. However, for a schoolboy, the four volumes, covering the history of Europe from 1326 to 1516, was a very fair compendium of mediæval annals, especially in the personal and biographical form of Froissart and Monstrelet. Ugh! with what gritty manuals, full of dates, genealogies and maps, are lads stuffed, like geese for *pâtés de foie gras*, when being crammed on a narrow "period" for their next exam.!

My own interest in the Catholic and Feudal Ages has always lain in the poetic and artistic side of it, not on the historic records of events—in Michaud's *Crusades*, Milman's *Latin Christianity*, some chronicles in Migne's *Patrologia*, and the art works of Paul Lacroix, of Jules Labarte, Viollet-le-Duc, and Ruskin. One who will try to make a serious study of the Gothic cathedrals of Europe, of the ancient castles and city remains, with competent books of reference—such as Avignon, Carcassonne, Pierrefonds, Verona, Pisa—will really understand the Middle Ages better than one who had spent twenty years in spelling out the entire series of the *Patrologia Latina*. Dante, Ariosto, Boccaccio, Fabliaux, chansons, cathedrals, castles, ramparts and towers—these are the *history* of Catholic Feudalism – there exists no other.

It was, no doubt, my love of the poetry and art of the Middle Ages which has tempered my interest in the two great inimitable satirists of Catholicism and Feudalism—Rabelais and Cervantes. Of course, I admire as much as anyone the inexhaustible wit of the Frenchman, and the Shakespearean wisdom and humour of the Spaniard. I feel them both to belong to the forefront of the modern literature of the world. All I mean is that I do not heartily take to them—go back on them—carry them with me on a journey. I have both, in the original and in famous translations, and also I have *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, with the illustrations of Gustave Doré, whose fertile and extravagant imagination, with a pencil that defies sanity, decency, and nature alike,

seems curiously akin to the madcap genius of Rabelais. I was one of the subscribers to the new translation of 1893, by W. F. Smith, of Cambridge and the Rabelais Club. But with all that I don't take to it.

I remember that as a young man I felt a positive detestation for *Don Quixote*. My sympathies were entirely with the Don, whom I fondly believed to be one of the noblest and sweetest souls in romance. At that age one judges with the heart more than with the head, and I was not philosopher enough to understand that Cervantes ranks with Shakespeare and Molière as having the profoundest knowledge of human nature. It took me years to get over my dislike of practical jokes played upon the heroic knight and lover. I find the Spanish of *Don Quixote* difficult, as I find the French of *Gargantua* difficult, and I use translations for both. And I also possess the quarto edition of *Don Quixote*, with the illustrations of Gustave Doré, which are less extravagant and more locally true than his Rabelais fantasies. I use now for *Don Quixote* the scholarly and graceful translation by John Ormsby, 4 vols., 1885, with *Introduction*, life and notes. This fine Spanish scholar has now reconciled me to follow the grotesque adventures of the chevalier. And I now see the truth of Comte's judgment of "that marvellous composition, in which Cervantes so naturally gathers all the family affections round a character of the most eccentric individuality, striking out at the same time, though he was not aware of it, the true theory of madness, *i.e.*, of subjective ideas overwhelming objective impressions, and so running wild without regard to external facts!"

The French *Fabliaux* verbally recalls *Fables* in our sense, though of course the *Fabliaux* are mainly romances in verse, with occasional *Fables*, such as *Le Chien et le Serpent*, i.e., the story of Llewelyn and his dog Gelert. The original of this is Eastern, and is adapted from the fables of Pilpay, or Bid-pai, the Hindoo Æsop. The larger part of the Fables known to Europe, and very many of the romances, such as that of Tell or Griselda, were drawn from the East. The Pilpay fables are the residuum of Eastern moral lessons that go back far beyond Æsop or any Greek or European source. They come to us from Indian, then Persian, and Italian and French adaptations. I know not if any one now reads Pilpai. I fear that Research has smothered up old Bídpáí in learned disquisitions about language. But I read the quaint stuff in a dirty old 12mo. in English version,

1789, with coarse primitive woodcuts to each fable, which keeps the original calf binding. A frowsy little book not worth one shilling at an open bookstall, with its faded type, absurd eighteenth century woodcuts, and the racy talk that Swift made familiar. To my mind, the easy vernacular of the English and the childish pictures at every other page, fall in with the homely wit and wisdom and the primeval good sense of the immortal "beast-epic."

I am free to admit that Bídpáí, whom nobody now reads for amusement, is often quite as good as Æsop, sometimes better as far nearer to the mind of our Fetichist ancestors, who trained for us the dog, the cat, the horse and the cow. As for Æsop, I read him in a tall folio (really a modern facsimile, of course of no bibliographical value, but exactly reproducing an original), the *Fables of Æsop and other eminent Mythologists, with Morals and Reflections, by Sir Roger L'Estrange, Kt., London, 1669.* . . . It has a wonderful frontispiece representing the dwarf and hunch-backed fabulist, surrounded by all manner of beasts, and inscribing his roll *utile dulci*. The text is printed very black, in "great primer," about 40 lines to a tall folio—headings are in very big "Old English" type, and the calf binding is a facsimile of that of 1669. This is just the book to recall our childish delight in the immortal apophthegms. I enjoy the rowdy knight's King Charles II. slang.

"As a Cock was turning up a Dunghill, he spy'd a *Diamond*. Well (says he to himself), this sparkling Foolery now to a Lapidary in my place, would have been the Making of him; but as to any purpose of mine, a *Barley-Corn* had been worth Forty on't."

L'Estrange's vernacular is that which an old carter might use in a roadside tavern.

"A slam (? slim) Thin-Gutted *Fox* made a hard shift to Wriggle his Body into a Hen-Roost, and when he had Stuff'd his Guts well, he squeez'd hard to get out again; but the Hole was too Little for him. There was a *Weazle* a pretty way off, that stood Learing at him all This While. Brother *Reynard* (says he), Your Belly was Empty when you went In, and you must e'en stay till Your Belly be Empty again, before you come Out."

Did Thomas Carlyle get his love of capitals from Sir Roger?

I rather prefer to read old books as nearly as possible in the form of the original, always providing the spelling or the antique language does not get troublesome, for I am no student of archaic style, and too busy to get up Anglo-Saxon, Old French, or Old English. And as I have neither the taste nor the purse to indulge in rare first editions, I am

ashamed to confess that I am content with a facsimile reprint. Now and then a bibliographical friend presents me with a fine old copy, which I guard with care, and now and then open. One such is an early quarto edition of the Epistles of S. Catherine of Siena—*Epistole et Orationi della seraphica vergine Santa Catharina da Siena—In Vinetia appresso Federico Toresano, MDxlviii.* This book was printed at Venice the year following the reign of our Henry VIII., in 305 pp., double column, *con la sua tavola*, i.e., with a quaint portrait of the Seraphic Virgin being crowned with three crosses by two angels. The inscription above her image runs thus: *Transit (? Transiit) ad sponsum tribus exornata coronis*, she holding in the right hand the crucifix, the martyr's palm, her lily emblem, and her book of Epistles; in the left hand she holds the burning heart of Jesus—but no *stigmata* are visible. In it are various Epistles to Popes Gregory XI. and Urban VI. from "*Catherina indegna e miserabile vostra figliola: serva e schiava di servi di Jesu Christo.*" Then follow letters to cardinals, nuntios, abbots, and fathers, whom she stimulates and lectures as if she were headmistress of a high school, even writing so to an archbishop. She certainly induced the miserable Gregory to leave Avignon. She preaches to the King of France as if she were his Father Confessor. I turned to the famous Letter of Catherine to Brother Raymond, of Capua, Letter cii., p. 92, describing her consolation given to Nicolas Tuldo, a young man of Perugia, executed at Rome, whom she visited in prison, assisted on the scaffold as his confessor, and took up his bloody head in her bosom. The story is given by Milman, in *Latin Christianity*, v. 391.

This is the story of the saint's intense love and charity, immortalised in Swinburne's beautiful poem, Siena:—

> **And the house, midway hanging, see**
> **That saw Saint Catherine bodily,**
> **Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,**
> **And the live light of fiery love**
> **Burn from her beautiful strange face,**
> **As in the sanguine sacred place**
> **Where, in pure hands, she took the head,**
> **Severed, and with pure lips still red**
> **Kissed the dead lips.**

But it is interesting to read her ecstatic letter about the culprit being taken up to Christ, in a book printed in Italy, in the year of our first Protestant king, and in the heyday of Loyola and Saint Theresa.

Another fine old book that we owe to a bibliographical friend is Corneille's verse translation or paraphrase of the *Imitation*, of 1658. It is a quarto in its original stout binding *L'Imitation de Jesus-Christ par P. Corneille, Rouen, par L. Maurry, m.dc.lviii.* It has some good plates—Christ giving the Sermon on the Mount, the Annunciation, the Call of Peter, and the Last Supper, all by F. Chauneau. I don't know if they read Corneille's paraphrase now; it is in the Positivist Library, and I have it in modern reprints. But it is interesting to read it in a volume published at Rouen in the lifetime of the poet under his own eyes. There is no lofty verse certainly in the paraphrase—but it has ample evidence of what Corneille himself called his *plume facile.* Here is a specimen :—On the Sacrament, Book iv., c. 2:

> Je cherche en altéré la fontaine de vie,
> Je cherche en affamé le pain vivifiant,
> Et c'est sur cet espoir que mon âme ravie
> Au Monarque du Ciel presente un mandiant.

The Latin in the margin reads thus:—

— accedo aeger ad Salvatorem, esuriens et sitiens ad fontem vitae, egenus ad Regem Cœli.

For my part, Corneille and Comte notwithstanding, I much prefer the original Latin.

Because I occasionally take up the profane *facetiae* of the *Fabliaux*, or a Rabelais, or smile at the gross vernacular of L'Estrange, it must not be assumed that I have ceased to care for the serious and even devotional books. Besides the *Imitation* by Corneille I have I don't know how many editions, both Latin and English. One is the text printed from the original autograph (so called) Berlin, 1874; another is a Leipsic edition of the Latin text, 1867, sm. 8vo, pp. 346, each page of text being inclosed in broad square margins of illustrations well copied from German manuscript pictures. Another very pleasant edition is the English version, published by Kegan, Paul & Co., 12mo, 1881, as one of the Parchment Series of Handbooks, with a fine engraved frontispiece by Sir W. Richmond. This is beautifully printed at the Chiswick Press, and is a really dainty book to handle and pleasant to the eye.

It happens that I have a personal interest in this edition, which, after 30 years have passed since its publication, I need not scruple to make public. Mr. Kegan Paul, an old friend

of mine, and once closely in touch with our Positivist body, took much interest in the new edition of the *Imitation*, which he was commissioned by Cardinal Newman, of the Oratory, to publish. Kegan Paul came to me one day and asked me if I would undertake the English translation for the Cardinal. I naturally hesitated, saying that his Eminence would hardly care to put it in my hands. "I have already consulted him," said Kegan Paul, "and he is quite willing to have you as a translator—adding that he would himself see that the theology was sound, and all that he wanted was an accurate translation in perfectly pure English." I confess my modesty shrank from such a test of my literary resources, and I declined the responsibility. But I have always remembered it as one of the most graceful compliments which I ever received since I could hold a pen.

Neither Dante, nor à Kempis, nor Cardinal Newman, "converted" me to Catholicism, for I am just as fond of my Milton. And I am a devout believer in the great Puritan Allegory of John Bunyan, which Macaulay declares to be the only work of its class with a strong human interest. Dr. Johnson, Tory and critic as he was, said the *Pilgrim's Progress* was one of the few books he could read to the end, and he wished it had been longer. There I think Johnson was wrong, for the allegory, as Macaulay shows, will not bear to be spun out to minute analogies. I hope every one knows Macaulay's *Essay* on Bunyan, one of the best in his whole series; for his great knowledge of the age and his political and religious detachment enable him, as Whig and moderate Churchman, to judge the Puritan enthusiast truly.

What is so strange of Bunyan's book is, that Catholics, Calvinists, Anglicans, and Agnostics all alike fall under its spell. There is even a Catholic *Pilgrim's Progress*, omitting Giant Pope, and there are translations in almost every known language. Comte put Bunyan beside à Kempis, and at Newton Hall we made a pilgrimage to his grave in Bunhill Fields and to his prison at Bedford. And we joined in raising the Memorial to him in the Abbey.

Indeed, another of my cheap facsimiles of old books is that of the first edition of *Pilgrim's Progress*, made by Elliot Stock, with great care and meticulous attention to the minutest detail, from the unique extant copy of 1678. The title page of this curious relic is worth setting out in full. This is how it is printed:—

THE

Pilgrim's Progress

FROM

THIS WORLD,

TO

That which is to Come:

Delivered under the Similitude of a

DREAM

Wherein is discovered,

The manner of his setting out,
His Dangerous journey; And safe
Arrival at the Desired Countrey.

I have used Similitudes, Hos. 12, 10.

By John Bunyan.

Licensed and Entred according to Order.

LONDON,

Printed for *Nath. Ponder* at the *Peacock*
in the *Poultrey* near *Cornhil*, 1678.

Of course the reprint only contains the First Part—with the entrance into Paradise of Hopeful and Christian, and the dismissal to Hell of Ignorance—"Then I saw that there was a way to Hell, even from the Gates of Heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a Dream." I confess I do not care so much for the Second Part, with Christiana and her children and Mr. Greatheart, though of course it is popular with young people, and has some new and fine things—such as the man with the Muckrake in the Interpreter's House, and other parables; and the land of Beulah, and the end of Christiana are pleasant. But, as a whole, the Second Part is to me too domestic, too much of a good book on Sunday for children, with the Catechism, and oh! the prim marriages on the Pilgrim Progress to Paradise! What dainty young ladies are the little Christian-kins in Stothard's graceful vignettes! It is far too intricate, too like an everyday novel, with a sort of mild Sunday-school tone in the discussions hardly veiled.

I once took the trouble to compare the original of 1678 Part I. with an edition of the completed text issued by the Religious Tract Society from Bunyan's last additions. I found that the added matter filled 35 pages out of 185, nearly one-fifth. The new matter is thus described:—

1. The second paragraph of the opening giving Christian's return home to his wife and children after his cry—"*What shall I do?*" This is a bathos, after the magnificent opening of the Dream. How could Bunyan with his genius for speech adopt the phrase in Acts ii., rather than that in Acts xvi., 30—"What shall I do *to be saved?*" This comes only in the revised edition.

2. Worldly Wiseman of the city Carnal Policy and his long dialogue (pp. 21-30 inclusive) is not in the first edition; and it rather hampers the action.

3. Mr. Legality is an added character.

4. Also the dialogue of Charity and Christian.

5. Three pages (103-105)—the dialogue of Evangelist, Faithful and Christian—is an afterthought.

6. Mr. By-ends' account of the town of Fair-Speech.

7. The whole of the discussion between By-ends, Money-love and Save-all (pp. 121-127) is new.

8. The story of Lot's wife, Korah, &c. (pp. 130-132).

9. Giant Despair's wife—Diffidence (pp. 136-141).

10. The Shining Company at the gate of the Celestial City (pp. 192-193).

To my taste, all these additions to Bunyan's first draft rather retard the action and the intensity of the picture, and introduce the elements of argumentative homily and of ingenious enigma. We are told that the *Pilgrim's Progress* was originally written as a private meditation in prison, without any thought of publication. The extended version was composed when the author was famous, and it loses the intense simplicity of the first draft. The Second Part, six years later, shares the fate of so many additions to great masterpieces. To my mind, it is what *Paradise Regained* is to *Paradise Lost*. To sum up my impressions, after comparing the original draft of 1678, with the tenth, his final edition of 1685, I distinctly prefer the early and simple forms of the immortal Protestant Divine Comedy. When Bunyan was tempted by his popularity to sermonise and lavish on successive versions his amazing resources of invention, the tremendous sincerity and vitality of his Dream began to be obscured by his own literary versatility. Men should read *Pilgrim's Progress* only in the text of 1678. Children will always delight in the family picnic of the Second Part, and may be usefully catechised in the various dialogues finally inserted in the original text.

As I opened this paper with Dante, I end it with Milton —the English poet to whom I most often turn. In our *Calendar*, Milton closes the month of Dante; our *Library* includes *Paradise Lost* and the *Lyrical Poems*; and in the *Life* of Milton which I wrote for our volume of Worthies I cited Comte's estimate of "the inimitable Epic as the highest measure of Man's poetic powers." Having had my say about Milton in our joint book of Biographies, I need say no more here about Epic or Lyrics. The 500 lines of the three great lyrical poems have, as I wrote, "every quality of poetry in literal perfection," and *Paradise Lost* has "music and conceptions even more sustained and enthralling, such as Shakespeare, Dante, and Homer alone can match."

In the 'forties, at King's College School, we had to learn by heart books of the *Paradise Lost*, which we studied critically, with annotations, "parallel passages," and other stuff of the kind, which perhaps did us more harm than good. At Wadham, on the appearance of my name in the Class List of Easter, 1853, the college presented me with

the *Works* of Milton, in the handsome edition of 1851, 8 vols. 8vo, printed by William Pickering, from the original editions, with the *Life* by John Mitford. This sumptuous book was solidly bound in antique calf, with the college arms on the cover, and old Ben Symons' Latin inscription. It has been my lifebelt in the storms of modern literature now for almost sixty years. I revel in the grand type and ancient typography, though I fear it has ruined my spelling for life, for the poet wrote—*And justifie the wayes of God to men* (*sic*). At Newton Hall I led a pilgrimage to visit the tomb of the poet in St. Giles', Cripplegate: and on another occasion to the antique cottage at Chalfont to which he retreated during the plague and wrote his *Paradise Regained*. To Milton I say—

> "What in me is dark illumine,
> What is low raise and support."

The Black Godmother

By John Galsworthy

SITTING out on the lawn at tea with our friend and his retriever, we had been discussing those massacres of the helpless which had of late occurred, and wondering that they should have been committed by the soldiery of so civilised a State, when in a momentary pause of our astonishment, our friend, who had been listening in silence, crumpling the drooping soft ear of his dog, looked up and said, "The cause of atrocities is Fear. Fear's at the back of all crimes, and most follies."

Knowing that his philosophical statements were always the result of concrete instance, and that he would not tell us what that instance was if we asked him—such being his nature—we were careful not to agree.

He gave us a look out of those eyes of his, so like the eyes of a mild eagle, and said abruptly: "What do you say to this, then? . . . I was out in the dog-days last year with this fellow of mine, looking for Osmunda, and stayed some days in a village—never mind the name. Coming back one evening from my tramp, I saw some boys stoning a mealy-coloured dog. I went up and told the young devils to stop it. They looked at me in the injured sort of way that boys do, and one of them called out, "It's mad, guv'nor!" "Nonsense!" I said. "Get off with you!" They took to their heels and the dog followed me. It was a young, leggy, mild-looking mongrel, cross—I should say—between a brown retriever and an Irish terrier. There was froth about its lips, and its eyes were watery; it looked indeed as if it might be in distemper. I was afraid of infection for this fellow of mine, and whenever it came too close shooed it away, till at last it slunk off altogether. Well, about nine o'clock, when I was settling down to write by the open window of my sitting-room—still daylight, and very quiet and warm—there began that most maddening sound, the barking of an unhappy dog. I could do nothing

with that continual "Yap—yap!" going on; and as it was too hot to shut the window, I went out to see if I could stop it. The men were all at the pub, and the women just finished with their gossip; there was no sound at all but the continual barking of this dog, somewhere away out in the fields. I travelled by ear across three meadows, till I came on a haystack by a pool of water. There was the dog sure enough—the same mealy-coloured mongrel, tied to a stake, yapping, and making frantic little runs on a bit of rusty chain; whirling round and round the stake, then standing quite still, shivering. I went up and spoke to it, but it backed into the haystack, and there it stayed shrinking away from me, with its tongue hanging out. It had been heavily struck by something on the head; the cheek was cut, one eye half-closed, and an ear badly swollen. I tried to get hold of it, but the poor thing was beside itself with fear. It snapped and flew round so that I had to give it up, and sit down with this fellow here beside me, to try and quiet it—a strange dog, you know, will generally form his estimate of you from the way it sees you treat another dog. I had to sit there quite half an hour before it would let me go up to it, pull the stake out, and lead it away. The poor beast, though it was so feeble from the blows it had received, was still half frantic, and I didn't dare touch it; and all the time I took good care that this fellow here didn't come too near. Then came the question what was to be done. There was no vet, of course, and I'd no place to put it except my sitting-room, which didn't belong to me. But, looking at its battered head, and its half-mad eyes, I thought: "No trusting you with these bumpkins; you'll have to come in here for the night!" Well, I got it in, and heaped two or three of those hairy little red rugs landladies are so fond of, up in a corner, and got it on to them, and put down my bread and milk. But it wouldn't eat—sense of proportion all gone, you see, fairly destroyed with terror. It lay there moaning, and every now and then it raised its head with a 'yap' of sheer fright, dreadful to hear, and bit the air, as if its enemies were on it again; and this fellow of mine lay in the opposite corner, with his head on his paw, full of dark thoughts. I sat up for a long time watching that poor beast, sick enough, and wondering how it had come to be stoned and kicked and battered into this state; and next day I made it my business to find out." Our friend

paused, scanned us a little angrily, and then went on: "It had made its first appearance, it seems, following a bicyclist. There are some men, you know—save the mark—who, when their beasts get ill or too expensive, jump on their bicycles and take them for a quick run, taking care never to look behind them. When they get back home they say: 'Hallo! where's Fido?' And there's an end! Well, this poor puppy gave up just as it got to our village; and, roaming about in search of water, attached itself to a farm labourer. The man—with excellent intentions, as he told me, himself—tried to take hold of it, but too abruptly, so that the startled puppy snapped at him. Whereon he kicked it for a dangerous cur, and it went drifting back towards the village, and fell in with the boys coming home from school. It thought no doubt that they were going to kick it too, and nipped one of them, who took it by the collar. Thereupon they hullabalooed and stoned it down the road to where I found them. Then I put in my little bit of torture, and drove it away, through fear of infection to my own dog. After that it seems to have fallen in with a man who told me: 'Well, you see, he came sneakin' round my house, with the children playin', and snapped at them when they went to stroke him, so that they came running in to their mother, an' she called to me in a fine takin' about a mad dog. I ran out with a shovel and gave 'im one, and drove him out. I'm sorry if he wasn't mad, he looked it right enough; you can't be too careful with strange dogs.' Its next acquaintance was an old stone-breaker, a very decent sort. 'Well! you see,' the old man explained to me, 'the dog came smellin' round my stones, an' it wouldn' come near, an' it wouldn' go away; it was all froth and blood about the jaw, and its eyes glarin' green at me. I thought to meself, bein' the dog-days—I don't like the look o' you, you look funny! So I took a stone, an' got it here, just on the ear; an' it fell over. And I thought to meself: Well, you've got to finish it, or it'll go bitin' somebody, for sure! But when I come to it with my hammer, the dog it got up—an' you know how it is when there's somethin' you've 'alf killed, and you feel sorry, and yet you feel you must finish it, an' you hit at it blind, you hit at it agen an' agen. The poor thing, it wriggled and snapped, an' I was terrified it'd bite me, an' some'ow it got away.'" Again our friend paused, and this time we dared not look at him.

"The next hospitality it was shown," he went on

presently, "was by a farmer, who, seeing it all bloody, drove it off, thinking it had been digging up a lamb that he'd just buried. The poor homeless beast came sneaking back, so he told his men to get rid of it. Well, they got hold of it somehow—there was a hole in its neck that looked as if they'd used a pitchfork—and, mortally afraid of its biting them, but not liking, as they told me, to drown it, for fear the owner might come on them—they got a stake and a chain, and fastened it up, and left it in the water by the haystack where I found it. I had some conversation with that farmer. 'Yes,' he said, 'but who was to know? I couldn't have my sheep worried. The brute had blood on his muzzle. These curs do a lot of harm when they've once been blooded. You can't run risks.'" Our friend cut viciously at a dandelion with his stick. "Run risks!" he broke out suddenly: "That was it—from beginning to end of that poor beast's sufferings, fear, fear, fear! From that fellow on the bicycle, afraid of the worry and expense, as soon as it showed signs of distemper, to the man with the pitchfork—not one of them, I dare say, would have gone out of his way to do it a harm. But they felt fear, and so—by the law of self-preservation, or whatever you like, it all began—till, there the poor thing was, with a battered head and a hole in its neck, ravenous with hunger, and too distraught even to lap my bread and milk. Yes, and there's something uncanny about a suffering animal—we sat watching it, and we were afraid, looking at its eyes and the way it bit the air. Fear! It's the black godmother of all damnable things!"

Our friend bent down, crumpling and crumpling at his dog's ears. We, too, gazed at the ground, thinking of that poor lost puppy, and the horrible inevitability of all that happens, seeing men are what they are; thinking of all the foul doings in the world, whose black godmother is Fear.

"And what became of the poor dog?" one of us asked at last.

"When," said our friend slowly, "I'd had my fill of watching, I covered it with a rug; took this fellow away with me, and went to bed. There was nothing else to do. At dawn I was wakened by three dreadful cries—not like a dog's at all. I hurried down. There was the poor beast—wriggled out from under the rug—stretched on its side, dead. This fellow of mine had followed me in, and he

went and sat down by the body. When I spoke to him he just looked round, and wagged his tail along the ground, but would not come away; and there he sat till it was buried, very interested, but not sorry at all."

Our friend was silent, looking angrily at something in the distance.

And we, too, were silent, seeing in spirit that vigil of early morning: The thin, lifeless, sandy-coloured body, stretched on those red mats; and this black creature—now lying at our feet - propped on its haunches like the dog in "The Death of Procris," patient, curious, ungrieved, staring down at it with his bright, interested eyes.

In Search of Divinity*

By George Moore

IV

"You've punctured!" AE said, and I could see that he looked upon the incident as ominous. "I can mend your puncture for you, but perhaps the quickest way will be to go back; the shop isn't more than a quarter of a mile from here."

And in it we met a young man, who advanced to meet us on long thin legs, his blue Celtic eyes full of inquiry. After listening, I thought, sympathetically to my mishap (he was really thinking of something else) he asked what he could do for me, and on my telling him again that I had punctured, he seemed to wake up sufficiently to call his partner, a thick-set man, who seized my machine and told me that he was just tightening a gentleman's wheel for him, but it wouldn't take more than a couple of minutes. In a quarter of an hour . . . could I wait that long?

He spoke with a Lancashire burr, and I began to wonder how the Celt and the Saxon had come together, so different were they, and why the red-headed Celt lingered about the shop, instead of going to the help of his fellow. It was to escape from unpleasant thoughts of my country's idleness that I asked him if the language movement was making progress in Dundalk; and when he told me that a branch of the Gaelic League had been started about two years ago, and that he was a constant attendant at the classes, I apologised to him inwardly for a hasty judgment; and seeing in him perhaps a future apostle I commenced preaching. A few people had just dropped in for a chat after dinner, and taking for my text the words that I had heard spoken on the road to Chelsea, I said:

"A few days after the voice spoke to me again; this time not out of the clouds but within a few inches of my

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ear, and the words that it spoke were, 'Go to Ireland, go to Ireland,' and not long after this second revelation a force completely outside of myself compelled me to fall upon my knees, and I prayed for the first time for many years. But it was not to any Christian God that I prayed."

AE looked up, hoping no doubt that I would not shock the young man's catholic susceptibilites to the point of his asking me to leave his shop, and thinking that in saying I had not prayed to a Christian God I had said enough, I admitted that the future religion of Ireland was not our business, but one for the next generation to settle—our business was to revive the Irish language, for the soul of Ireland was implicit in it; and pulling out of my pocket a copy of the *Claideamh Soluis*, I described the aims and ambitions of the paper.

But a cloud came into the young man's face and into the faces of the three or four people present whom I invited to subscribe to it, and the thought dashed through my mind that I was being mistaken for an advertising agent, and to remove such sordid suspicion I told them that I had no pecuniary interest in the paper whatever, but was working for the language of our forefathers, and to support this paper (the organ of the League) seemed to me part of the work I had been sent to do in Ireland. The best way to do this was by getting advertisements for the paper, and my way of getting advertisements was simple and advantageous to all parties. I had rented a house in Dublin. The roof was leaking and a builder had to be called in; he had been given the job of repairing the roof on condition that he advertised in the *Claideamh Soluis*. The upholsterer had furnished my house under the same conditions; and as soon as I came to live in it I had gone to the butcher, the grocer, the chandler, the greengrocer, the apothecary, the baker, the tailor, the draper, the bootmaker: "You shall have my custom if you advertise in the *Claideamh Soluis*. . . . And you, sir, having bicycles to sell may like to do business with me on the same terms."

The young Celt agreed that he would like to do business with me, but being somewhat slow-witted said he must refer the matter to his partner.

"But why refer it to your partner?" I answered. "Everybody will advertise if he is sure of getting custom; and I am the only advertising agent in the world who can insure a speedy return for the money laid out."

While the young man hesitated AE reminded me that my method was not as applicable to bicycles as to furniture and food, for if I were to buy a bicycle every time I punctured I should have more machines on my hands than it would be possible for me to find use for. And when the Lancashire man came in with the bicycle on his shoulder the young Celt tried to explain to him the conditions of my purchasing a machine from them (conditions which I could see by the partner's face he was quite willing to accept).

"We shan't get to Slievegullion to-day if you don't hasten," AE said; but the Lancashire man, loth to lose a chance of selling a bicycle, sent the young Celt along with us, the pretext being to put us on the right road; and we all three pedalled away together, myself riding in the middle, explaining to the young Celt that language wears out like a coat, and just as a man has to change his coat when it becomes threadbare a nation has to change its language if it is to produce a new literature. There could be no doubt about this: Italy had produced a new literature because Italy had changed her language; whereas Greece had not changed hers and there was no literature in Greece, and there could be none until the modern language had separated itself sufficiently from the ancient.

The young man seemed to wish to interpose a remark, but I dashed into a new theory: ideas were climatic, the climate of Ireland had produced certain modes of thought and these could only transpire in the language of the country, for of course the language is only the echo of the mind. The young man again tried to interpose a remark, and AE tried too, but neither succeeded in getting heard, for it seemed to me of primary importance to convince the young man that literary genius depended upon the language as much as upon the writer, and Ireland was proof of it, for though Irishmen had been speaking English for centuries they had never mastered that language.

"If Irishmen would only read English literature, but they read the daily paper," AE shouted from the other side of the road.

"But AE, a nation reads the literature that itself produces. Ireland cannot be as much interested in Shakespeare as England is, or in the Bible, Ireland having accepted the Church of Rome, and the two ways of learning English are through the Bible and Shakespeare."

But there is an excellent Irish translation of the Bible,

nearly as good as the English Bible," and AE appealed to the young Celt, who admitted that he had heard that Bedell's Bible was in very good Irish.

"But it isn't read in the classes."

"And why isn't it read in the classes?" I asked.

"Well, you see, it was done by a Protestant."

I screamed at him that it was ridiculous to reject good Irish because a Protestant wrote it.

"You are a native speaker, sir?"

"No," I answered, "I don't know any Irish."

The young man gazed at me, and AE began to laugh.

"You should begin to learn; and I hope you won't mind taking this little book from me; it is O'Growneys' first book. I am in the fifth. And now," he said, "I don't think I'll go any further with you. The cromlech—you can't miss it when you come to the first gate on the left."

He left us so abruptly that I could not return the book to him and had to put it in my pocket, and the incident amused AE until we came to a gate about half a mile up the road, which we passed through, coming upon the altar of our forefathers in the middle of a large green field: a great rock poised upon three or four upright stones, nine or ten feet high, and one stone worn away at the base, but rebuilt by some pious hand, for the belief abides that Diarmuid and Grania slept under the cromlech in their flight from Finn.

"Traditions are often more truthful than scripts," AE said, and believing in this as in everything he says, I walked round the cromlech three times praying, and when my devotions were finished I returned to AE, who was putting the last touches to a beautiful drawing of the altar, a little nervous lest he should question me as to the prayers I had offered up. But instead of groping in anyone's religious belief, AE talks sympathetically of Gods ascending and descending in many-coloured spirals of flame, and of the ages before men turned from the reading of earth to the reading of scrolls and of the earth herself, the origin of all things and the miracle of miracles. AE is extraordinarily forthcoming, and while speaking to me nothing of himself remains behind, the revelation is continuous, and the belief imminent that he comes of divine stock and has been sent into the world on an errand.

This was my meditation as I watched him packing up his pastels. We went together to the warrior's grave at the

other end of the field and stood by it wondering what his story might be in the beautiful summer weather. And then my memory disappears. It emerges again some miles further on, for we were brought to a standstill by another puncture, and this second puncture so greatly stirred AE's fears lest the Gods did not wish to see me on the top of their mountain, that it was difficult for me to persuade him to go into the cottage for a basin of water. At last he consented, and while he worked hard heaving the tyre from off the wheel with many curious instruments which he extracted from a leather pocket behind the saddle of his machine, I talked to him of Ireland, hoping thereby to distract his attention from the heat of the day. It was not difficult to do this, for AE, like Dujardin, can be interested in ideas at any time of the day and night, though the sweat pours from his forehead, and I could see that he was listening while I told him that we should have room to dream and think in Ireland when America had drawn from us another million and half of the population.

"Two millions is the ideal population for Ireland, and about four for England. Do you know, AE, there could not have been more than two million people in England when Robin Hood and his merry men haunted Sherwood Forest. How much more variegated the world was then! At any moment one might come upon an archer who had just split a willow wand distant a hundred yards, or upon charcoal burners with their fingers and thumbs cut off for shooting deer, or jugglers standing on each other's heads in the middle of sunlit inter-spaces! And oh, how beautiful! A little further on to hear the hymn of pilgrims on their way to Canterbury! Is the world of vagrancy lost to us for ever, AE?"

AE hoped that the destiny of Ireland was not to become as England is, and he thought it quite right that England should supply us with hardware.

"The economic conditions of the two countries are quite different." It was with pleasure that I heard him say that he did not wish the smoke-pall of Wolverhampton to lower over Dundalk; and he said many other interesting things which would have gladdened Plunkett's heart, but my memory curls and rushes into darkness at the word "economic," and a considerable time must have elapsed, for we were well on our way when I heard my own voice saying:

"Will this hill never cease?"

"We're going to Slievegullion."

"True for you," I said, "for every half mile the road gets steeper, which I suppose is always the case when one is going towards a mountain." But despite the steepness, which should have left no doubt upon his mind, AE was not satisfied that we were in the right road, and he jumped off his bicycle to call to a man, who left his work willingly to come to our assistance, whether from Irish politeness or because of the heat of the day I am still in doubt. As he came towards us his pale and perplexed eyes attracted my attention; they recalled to mind the ratlike faces with the long upper lip that used to come from the mountains to Moore Hall, with bank-notes in their tall hats, a little decaying race in knee-breeches, worsted stockings and heavy shoon, whom we used to despise because they could not speak English. Now it was the other way round; I was angry with this little fellow because he had no Irish. But his father he said was a great Irish speaker, and he would have told us the story of the decline of the language in the district if AE had not suddenly interrupted him with questions regarding the distance to Slievegullion.

"If it's to the tip top you're thinking of going, about another four miles," and he told us we would find a woman in a cabin who would mind our bicycles for us about a mile up the road; and from her houseen he had always heard that it was three miles to the top of the mountain; that was how he reckoned that it was four miles from where we stood to the lake. He had never been to the top of Slievegullion himself, but he had heard of the lake from those who had been up there, and he thought that he had heard of Finn from his father, but he disremembered if Finn had plunged into the lake after some beautiful queen.

"Things that have lived too long in the same place become melancholy, AE. Let him emigrate. He is no use to us. He has forgotten his Irish and the old stories that carried the soul of the ancient Gael right down to the present generation. I'm afraid, AE, that ancient Ireland died at the beginning of the nineteenth century and beyond hope of resurrection."

AE was thinking at that moment if the peasant had directed us rightly, and impatient for an answer I continued:

"Can the dreams, the aspirations and traditions of the ancient Gael be translated into English?" And being easily cast down I asked if the beliefs of the ancient Gael

were not a part of his civilisation and have lost all meaning for us?

"That would be so," AE answered, "if truth were a casual thing of to-day and to-morrow, but men knew the great truths thousands of years ago, and it seems to me that these truths are returning, and that we shall soon possess them, not perhaps exactly as the ancient Gael——"

"I hope that you are right, AE, for all my life is engaged in this adventure. I think that you are right, and that the ancient Gael was nearer to nature than we have ever been since we turned for inspiration to Galilee."

"The fault I find with Christianity is that it is no more than a code of morals, whereas three things are required for a religion—a cosmogony, a psychology, and a moral code."

"I'm sure you're right, AE, but the heat is so great that I feel I cannot push this bicycle up the hill any further. You must wait for me till I take off my drawers." And behind a hedge I rid myself of them. "You were telling me that the dreams and aspirations and visions of the Celtic race have lost none of their ancient power as they descended from generation to generation."

"I don't think they have." And I listened to him telling how these have crept through dream after dream of the manifold nature of man, and how each dream, heroism, or beauty has laid itself nigh the divine power it represents. Deirdre was like Helen . . . it went to my heart to interrupt him, but the heat was so great that to listen to him with all my soul I must rid myself of the rest of my hosiery, and so again retired behind a hedge, and returning with nothing on my moist body but a pair of trousers and a shirt I leaned over the handle-bars, and by putting forth all my strength, mental as well as physical, contrived to reach the cottage.

We left our bicycles with the woman of the house and started for the top of the mountain. The spare, scant fields were cracked and hot underfoot, but AE seemed unaware of any physical discomfort. Miraculously sustained by the hope of reaching the sacred lake he hopped over the walls dividing the fields like a goat, though these were built out of loose stones, every one as hot as if it had just come out of a fire; and I heard him say that man was not a momentary seeming but a pilgrim of eternity as I fell back exhausted among some brambles.

"What is the matter, Moore? Can't you get up?"

"I am unbearably tired, AE, and the heat is so great that I can't get over this wall."

"Take a little rest, and then you'll be able to come along with me."

"No, no, AE; I'm certain that to-day it would be impossible. All the way up that mountain, a long struggle over stones and through heather. No, no. If there were a donkey or a pony!"

AE conjured me to rise.

"I'm sorry, but I can't. It is very unfortunate, for you will see Finn, and I might see him too, whether in the spirit or in the flesh I know not; we should come down from that mountain different beings, that I know; but it's impossible."

"Get up. I tell you to get up. You must get up."

A lithe figure in grey clothes and an old brown hat bade me arise and walk; his shining grey eyes were filled with all the will he had taught himself to concentrate when after a long day's work at Pim's as accountant he retired to his little room and communicated with Weekes and Johnson, though they were hundreds of miles away; but great as the force of his will undoubtedly is, he could not infuse in me sufficient energy to proceed; my body remained inert, and he left me, saying that alone he would climb the mountain; and I saw him going away, and the gritty and grimy mountain showing aloft in ugly outline upon a burning sky.

"Going to see Finn," I murmured; "I would sit with him by the holy lake waiting for the vision, but I may not get there. Two hours' climb. I couldn't, I couldn't. He'll certainly spend an hour by the lake, and he will take two hours to come back; and all that time I shall sit in a baking field. Oh Lord!" Catching sight of some hazels growing in the corner of the field I struggled to my feet. The hazel leaf is displeasing to look upon, and to touch it puts one's teeth on edge. I withdrew my painful feet out of the white light; but the shade of the copse was insufficient, and noticing that my tongue was like a dry stick, I left the hazels and walked across the field towards the cottage where we had left our bicycles. "May I have a drink of water," I asked, looking over the half-door. Two women came out of the gloom, and after talking between themselves one of them asked wouldn't I rather have a drop of milk?—a fine-looking girl with soft grey eyes and a friendly manner; the other was a rougher, an uglier sort.

I drank from the bowl and could have easily finished the milk, but lifting my eyes suddenly I caught sight of a flat-faced child with flaxen hair all in curl watching me; and it occurring to me at that moment that it might be his milk I was drinking, I put down the bowl and my hand went to my pocket.

"How much is the milk?"

"You're heartily welcome to it, sir," the young woman answered. "Sure it was only a sup."

"No, I must pay you."

But all my money had been left in Dundalk, and I stood penniless before these poor people, having drunk their milk.

"My friend will come from the mountain to fetch his bicycle and he will pay you." Again the young woman said I was welcome to the milk; but I did'nt know that AE had any money upon him, and it occurred to me to offer her my vest and drawers. She said she couldn't think of taking them, eyeing them all the while. At last she took them, and asked me to sit down and take the weight off my limbs. "Thank you, kindly," and sitting on the proffered stool, I asked if they were Irish speakers.

"Himself's mother can speak it." I turned towards the old woman, who sat by the ashes of the peat which had been allowed to burn out; her yellow hands hung over her knees, her thick white hair showed under a black knitted cap; her eyes watched me, and she saying never a word in answer to my questions. "She's gone a little bothered lately, and wouldn't know what you'd be asking her."

The two women did not seem conversational, the old woman and the child could only stare, so I left a message with them for AE that I would bicycle on to Dundalk very slowly, and hoped he would overtake me. And it was about two hours after he came up with me, not a bit tired after his long walk, and very willing to tell me how he had had to rest under the rocks on his way to the summit, enduring dreadful thirst, for there was no rill; all were dry, and he had been glad to dip his hat into the lake and drink the soft bog water, and then to lie at length among the heather. So intense was the silence that his thoughts were afraid to move, and he lay, his eyes roving over boundless space, seeing nothing but the phantom tops of distant mountains; the outer rim of the world, so did they seem to him. At each end of the crescent-shaped lake

there is a great cairn built of Cyclopean stones; and into one of these cairns he had descended and had followed the passage leading into the heart of the mountain till he came upon a great boulder which twenty men could not move, and which looked as if it had been hurled down there by some giant.

"Perchance to save the Druid mysteries from curious eyes," I said, and a great regret welled up in me that I had not been strong enough to climb that mountain with him. "What have I missed, AE? Oh, what have I missed?" And as if to console me for my weakness AE told me that he had made a drawing of the cairn which he would show me as soon as we reached Dundalk. All the while I was afraid to ask him if he had seen Finn, for if he had seen the hero plunge into the lake after the queen's white limbs I should have looked upon myself as among the most unfortunate of men. But AE had not seen Finn. He spoke of alien influences, and as we rode down the long roads under the deepening sky we wondered how the powers of the material world could have reached as far as the sacred lake, violating even the mysterious silence that sings about the Gods. That the silence of the lake had been violated was certain, for the trance that was beginning to gather melted away; his eyes had opened in the knowledge that the Gods were no longer by him; and seeing that the evening was gathering on the mountain he had packed up his drawings.

"But the night will be star-lit. If I had been able to get there I shouldn't have minded waiting. Were you on the mountain now, AE, you would be seeing that horned moon reflected in the crescent-shaped lake. It was faint-hearted of you."

At that moment two broad backs bicycling in front of us explained the sudden withdrawal of the Gods. Our two Christian wayfarers had been prowling about Slievegullion, and our wheels had not revolved many times before we had overtaken them.

"We meet again, sir, and your day has been a pleasant one, I hope."

"It has been very hot," he answered; "too hot for Slievegullion. We couldn't get more than half-way. It was my friend that sat down overcome by the heat."

AE began to laugh.

"What is your friend laughing at?"

And the story of how my strength had failed me at the third wall was told.

"I quite sympathise with you," said the one that had been overtaken like myself from the heat. "Did the poet get to the top?"

"Yes, he did," I replied, sharply.

"And did the view compensate you for the walk?"

"There is no view," AE answered; "only a rim of pearl-coloured mountains—the edge of the world they seemed—and an intense silence."

"That isn't enough to climb a thousand feet for," said the chubbier of the two.

"But it wasn't for the view he went there," I replied indignantly, "but for the Gods."

"For the Gods!"

"And why not? Are there no God's but yours?"

My question was not answered, and at the end of an awkward silence we talked about indifferent things till we came to Dundalk. We happened to be staying at the same inn, and AE suggested that we should ask the Presbyterians to dine with us, having in mind not the dinner but the supper of ideas which he was preparing for them, and that supper began with the dinner; even before the arrival of the chops they were being told that Slievegullion was the most celebrated mountain in all Celtic theology, and enveloped in the most beautiful Gospels. It distressed me to see AE neglect his dinner, and I insisted that he must finish his chop before he unpacked his portfolio and showed the drawing he had made of the crescent-shaped lake. He eat for a little while, but it was impossible to restrain him from telling how Finn had seen a fairy face rise above the waters of the lake and had plunged in after it. Whether he captured the nymph and for how long he had enjoyed her is not related, but it is told that when he rose to the surface again he was an old man, old as the mountains and the rocks of the world. But his youth was given back to him by enchantment, and of the adventure nothing remained except his snow-white hair, which was so beautiful and became him so well that it had not been altered back to its original colour. The Presbyterians learnt that evening that it was on this mountain that Cuchulain found the fabled horse, Leath Macha, and AE told them in language which still rings in my memory of the great battle of the ford and the giant chivalry of the Ultonians. He spoke

to them of the untamable manhood, and of the exploits of Cuchulain, and the children of Rury, "more admirable," he said, "as types, more noble and inspiring than the hierarchy of little saints who came later and cursed their memories."

This last passage seemed to conciliate the Presbyterians; they looked approvingly; but AE's soul refuses to recognise the miserable disputes of certain Christian sects. He was thinking of Cuchulain, the smith, who lived in the mountain and who forged the Ultonians their armour. And when that story had been related he remembered that he had not told them of Manaanan MacLir, the most remote and most spiritual of all Gaelic divinities, the uttermost God, of the Feast of Age, the Druid counterpart of the mysteries, and how anyone who partook of that Feast became himself immortal. It is a great grief to me that no single note was taken at the time of that extraordinary evening spent with AE in the inn at Dundalk, eating hard chops and drinking stale beer. The fare was poor, but what thoughts and what eloquence! A shorthand writer should have been by me; she is never with us when she should be; I might have gone to my room and taken notes, but no note was taken, alas . . . A change came into the face of the Presbyterians as they listened to AE, even their attitudes seemed to become noble. AE did not see them; he was too absorbed in his ideas; but I saw them, and thought the while of barren rocks that the sun gilds for a moment. And then not satisfied with that simile I thought how at mid-day a ray finds its way even into the darkest valley. We had remained in the valley of the senses—our weak flesh had kept us there, but AE had ascended the mountain of the spirit and a divine light was about him. It is the mission of some men to enable their fellows to live beyond themselves. AE possesses this power in an extraordinary degree, and we were lifted above ourselves.

My memory of that evening is one which time is powerless to efface, and though years have passed by, the moment is remembered when AE said that religion must always be exotic which makes a far-off land sacred rather than the earth underfoot, and then he denied that the Genius of the Gael had ever owed any of its inspiration to priestly teaching. Its own folk tales—(our talk is always reported incorrectly, and in these memories of AE there must be a great deal of myself, it sounds so like myself that

I hesitate to attribute this sentence to him; yet it seems to me that I can still hear him speaking it)—the folk tales of Connaught have ever lain nearer to the hearts of the people than those of Galilee. Whatever there is of worth in Celtic song and story is woven into them, imagery handed down from the dim Druidic ages. And did I not hear him say that soon the children of Eri, a new race, shall roll out their thoughts on the hillsides before your very doors; oh, priests! calling your flocks from your dark chapels and twilight sanctuaries to a temple not built with hands—sun-lit, star-lit, sweet with the odour and incense of earth, from your altars call them to the altars of the hills, soon to be lit up as of old, soon to be blazing torches of God over the land. These heroes I see emerging. Have they not come forth in every land and race when there was need? Here, too, they will arise. My ears retain memories of his voice when he cried, "Ah, my darlings, you will have to fight and suffer; you must endure loneliness, the coldness of friends, the alienation of love, warmed only by the bright interior hope of a future you must toil for but may never see, letting the deed be its own reward; laying in dark places the foundations of that high and holy Eri of prophecy, the isle of enchantment, burning with Druidic splendours, bright with immortal presences, with the face of the everlasting beauty looking in upon all its ways, divine with terrestrial mingling till God and the world are one."

But how much more eloquent were thy words than any that my memory recalls! Yet sometimes it seems to me that thy words have floated back almost as thou didst speak them, aggravating the calumny of an imperfect record. But for the record to be perfect the accent of thy voice and the light in thine eyes, and the whole scene—the maculated table-cloth, the beard, the chops, everything would have to be reproduced. How vain is art! That hour in the inn in Dundalk is lost for ever. The drifting of the ministers to their beds. Faint, indeed, is the memory of their passing, so faint that it will be better not to attempt to record it, but to pass on to another event, to the portrait which AE drew of me that evening; for kept awake by the presences of the Gods on the mountain he said he must do a portrait of me, and the portrait is a better record of the dream that he brought down with him from the mountain than any words of mine. It hangs in a house in Galway, and it is clearly the work of one who has been with the

Gods, for in it my hair is hyacinthine and my eyes are full of holy light. The portrait was executed in an hour, and even this work could not quell AE's ardour; he would have sat up till morning had I allowed him, telling me his theory of numbers; but I said:

"Suppose we reserve that theory for to-morrow? Sufficient for the day is the blessing thereof."

Second Best

By D. H. Lawrence

"Oh, I'm tired!" Frances exclaimed, petulantly, and in the same instant she dropped down on the turf, near the hedge bottom. Anne stood a moment in astonishment, then, accustomed to the vagaries of her beloved Frances, said:

"Well, and aren't you always likely to be tired, after travelling that blessed long way from Liverpool yesterday?" and she plumped down beside her sister. Anne was a wise young body of fourteen, very buxom, brimming with common sense. Frances, on the other hand, was twenty-three, and whimsical, spasmodic. But then, she was the beauty and the clever child of the family. She plucked the goose-grass buttons from her dress in a nervous, despairing fashion. Her beautiful profile, looped above with black hair, and rich with the dusky-and-scarlet complexion of a pear, was calm as a mask, but her thin brown hand plucked nervously.

"It's not the journey," she said, resenting Anne's obtuseness. Anne looked inquiringly at her darling. The young girl, in her self-confident, practical way, proceeded to reckon up this whimsical creature. But suddenly she found herself full in the eyes of Frances; felt two dark, hectic eyes flaring challenge at her, and she shrank away. Frances was peculiar for these great, exposed looks, which disconcerted people by their violence and their suddenness.

"What's a matter, poor old duck?" asked Anne, as she folded the slight, wilful form of her sister in her arms. Frances laughed shakily, and nestled down for comfort on the budding breasts of the strong girl.

"Oh, I'm only a bit tired," she murmured, on the point of tears.

"Well, of course you are, what do you expect?" soothed Anne. It was a joke to Frances that Anne should play elder, almost mother to her. But then, Anne was in her unvexed teens; men were like big dogs to her: while Frances, at twenty-three, had suffered a good deal from love.

The country was intensely morning-still. On the common everything shone beside its shadow, and the dry-grassed hillside gave off heat in silence. The brown turf seemed in a low state of combustion, the leaves of the oaks were scorched brown. Among the blackish foliage in the distance, the red and orange of the village shone like fruits.

The willows in the brook-course at the foot of the common suddenly shook with a dazzling effect like diamonds. It was a puff of wind. Anne resumed her normal position. She spread her knees, and put in her lap a handful of hazel nuts, whitey-green leafy things, whose one cheek was tanned between brown and pink. These she began to crack and eat. Frances, with bowed head, mused bitterly.

"Eh, you know Tom Smedley?" began the young girl, as she pulled a tight kernel out of its shell.

"I suppose so," replied Frances, sarcastically.

"Well, he gave me a wild rabbit what he'd caught, to keep with my tame one—and it's living."

"That's a good thing," said Frances, very quiet and ironic.

"Well, it *is!* He reckoned he'd take me to Ollerton Feast, but he never did. No, he took a servant from the Rectory; I saw him."

"So he ought," said Frances.

"No, he oughtn't! and I told him so. And I told him I should tell you—an' I have done."

Click and snap went a nut between her teeth. She sorted out the kernel, and chewed complacently.

"It doesn't make much difference," said Frances.

"Well, 'appen it doesn't; but I was mad with him, all the same."

"Why?"

"Because I was; he's no right to go with a servant."

"He's a perfect right," persisted Frances, very just and cold.

"No, he hasn't, when he'd said he'd take me."

Frances burst into a laugh of amusement.

"Oh no; I'd forgot that," she said, adding, "And what did he say when you promised to tell me?"

"He laughed and said, 'She won't fret her fat over that.'"

"And she won't," sniffed Frances.

There was silence. The common, with its sere, blonde-headed thistles, its heaps of silent bramble, its brown-husked

gorse in the glare of sunshine, seemed visionary. Across the brook began the immense pattern of agriculture, white chequering of barley stubble, brown squares of wheat, khaki patches of pasture, red stripes of fallow, with the woodland and the tiny village dark like ornaments, leading away to the distance, right to the hills, where the check-pattern grew smaller and smaller, till, in the blackish haze of heat, far off, only the tiny white squares of barley stubble showed distinct.

"Eh, I say, here's a rabbit hole!" cried Anne suddenly. "Should we watch if one comes out? You won't have to fidget, you know."

The two girls sat perfectly still. Frances watched certain objects in her surroundings: they had a peculiar, unfriendly look about them: the weight of greenish elderberries on their purpling stalks; the twinkling of the yellowing crab apples that clustered high up in the hedge, against the sky: the exhausted, limp leaves of the primroses lying flat in the hedge-bottom: all looked strange to her. Then her eye caught a movement. A mole was moving silently over the warm, red soil, nosing, shuffling hither and thither, flat, and dark as a shadow, shifting about, and as suddenly brisk, and as silent, like a very ghost of *joie de vivre*. Frances started, from habit was about to call on Anne to kill the little pest. But, to-day, her lethargy of unhappiness was too much for her. She watched the little brute paddling, snuffing, touching things to discover them, running in blindness, delighted to ecstasy by the sunlight and the hot, strange things that caressed its belly and its nose. She felt a keen pity for the little creature.

"Eh, our Fran, look there! It's a mole."

Anne was on her feet, standing watching the dark, unconscious beast. Frances frowned with anxiety.

"It doesn't run off, does it?" said the young girl softly. Then she stealthily approached the creature. The mole paddled fumblingly away. In an instant Anne put her foot upon it, not too heavily. Frances could see the struggling, swimming movement of the little pink hands of the brute, the twisting and twitching of its pointed nose, as it wrestled under the sole of the boot.

It *does* wriggle!" said the bonny girl, knitting her brows in a frown at the eerie sensation. Then she bent down to look at her trap. Frances could now see, beyond the edge of the boot-sole, the heaving of the velvet shoulders, the

pitiful turning of the sightless face, the frantic rowing of the flat, pink hands.

"Kill the thing," she said, turning away her face.

"Oh—I'm not," laughed Anne, shrinking. "You can, if you like."

"I don't like," said Frances, with quiet intensity.

After several dabbing attempts, Anne succeeded in picking up the little animal by the scruff of its neck. It threw back its head, flung its long blind snout from side to side, the mouth open in a peculiar oblong, with tiny pinkish teeth at the edge. The blind, frantic mouth gaped and writhed. The body, heavy and clumsy, hung scarcely moving.

"Isn't it a snappy little thing," observed Anne, twisting to avoid the teeth.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked Frances sharply.

"It's got to be killed—look at the damage they do. I s'll take it home and let Dadda or somebody kill it. I'm not going to let it go."

She swaddled the creature clumsily in her pocket handkerchief and sat down beside her sister. There was an interval of silence, during which Anne combated the efforts of the mole.

"You've not had much to say about Jimmy this time. Did you see him often in Liverpool?" Anne asked, suddenly.

"Once or twice," replied Frances, giving no sign of how the question troubled her.

"And aren't you sweet on him any more, then?"

"I should think I'm not, seeing that he's engaged."

"Engaged? Jimmy Barrass! Well, of all things! I never thought *he'd* get engaged."

"Why not, don't other men?" snapped Frances.

Anne was fumbling with the mole.

"'Appen they do," she said at length; "but I never thought Jimmy would, though."

"Why not?" snapped Frances.

"*I* don't know—this blessed mole, it'll not keep still!—who's he got engaged to?"

"How should I know."

"I thought you'd ask him; you've known him long enough. I s'd think he thought he'd get engaged now he's a Doctor of Chemistry."

Frances laughed in spite of herself.

"What's that got to do with it?" she asked.

"I'm sure it's got a lot. He'll want to feel *somebody* now, so he's got engaged. Hey, stop it; go in!"

But at this juncture the mole almost succeeded in wriggling clear. It wrestled and twisted frantically, waved its pointed blind head, its mouth standing open like a little shaft, its big, wrinkled hands spread out.

"Go in with you!" urged Anne, poking the little creature with her forefinger, trying to get it back into the handkerchief. Suddenly the mouth turned like a spark on her finger.

"Oh!" she cried, "he's bit me."

She dropped him to the floor. Dazed, the blind creature fumbled round. Frances felt like shrieking. She expected him to dart away in a flash, like a mouse, and there he remained groping; she wanted to cry to him to be gone. Anne, in a sudden decision of wrath caught up her sister's walking-cane. With one blow the mole was dead. Frances was startled and shocked. One moment the little wretch was fussing in the heat, and the next it lay like a little bag, inert and black—not a struggle, scarce a quiver.

"It is dead!" Frances said breathlessly. Anne took her finger from her mouth, looked at the tiny pinpricks, and said:

"Yes he is, and I'm glad. They're vicious little nuisances, moles are."

With which her wrath vanished. She picked up the dead animal.

"Hasn't it got a beautiful skin," she mused, stroking the fur with her forefinger, then with her cheek.

"Mind," said Frances sharply. "You'll have the blood on your skirt!"

One ruby drop of blood hung on the small snout, ready to fall. Anne shook it off on to some harebells. Frances suddenly became calm; in that moment, grown-up.

"I suppose they have to be killed," she said, and a certain rather dreary indifference succeeded to her grief. The twinkling crab-apples, the glitter of brilliant willows now seemed to her trifling, scarcely worth the notice. Something had died in her, so that things lost their poignancy. She was calm, indifference overlying her quiet sadness. Rising, she walked down to the brook course.

"Here, wait for me," cried Anne, coming tumbling after.

Frances stood on the bridge, looking at the red mud trodden into pockets by the feet of the cattle. There was not a drain of water left, but everything smelled green, succulent. Why did she care so little for Anne, who was so fond, she asked herself. Why did she care so little for anyone. She did not know, but she felt a rather stubborn pride in her isolation and indifference.

They entered a field where stooks of barley stood in rows, the straight, blonde tresses of the corn streaming on to the ground. The stubble was bleached by the intense summer, so that the expanse glared painfully. The next field was sweet and soft with a second crop of seeds; thin, straggling clover whose little pink knobs rested prettily in the dark green. The scent was faint and sickly. The girls came up in single file, Frances leading.

Near the gate a young man was mowing with the scythe some fodder for the afternoon feed of the cattle. As he saw the girls he left off working and waited in an aimless kind of way. Frances was dressed in white muslin, and she walked with a beautiful dignity of repose. Her lack of agitation, her simple, natural advance made him nervous. She had loved the far-off Jimmy for five years, having had in return his half-measures. Now she was coming to Tom.

Tom was of medium stature, virile and energetic in build. His smooth, fair-skinned face was burned red, not brown, by the sun, and this ruddiness enhanced his appearance of good humour and easiness. Being a year older than Frances, he would have courted her long ago had she been so inclined. As it was he had gone his uneventful way quite amiably, chatting with many a girl, but remaining easy-minded, free of thought or introspection as any lad of seventeen. He hitched his trousers just a trifle self-consciously as the girls approached. He did not examine or appreciate: he only felt that Frances was a rare, delicate kind of being, whom he scarcely perceived, but whom he realised with a queer and delicious stimulation in his veins. She gave him a slight sense of suffocation. Somehow, this morning, she seemed to affect him more than usual. She was dressed in white.

Frances knew what she was about. Tom was ready to love her as soon as she would let him. Now that she could not have Jimmy, she did not poignantly care about her life. Still, if she did not hold out her hands to Life and cry to it, she loved it well enough. If she could not have the best —Jimmy, whom she knew to be something of a prig—she

would have the second best, Tom. She advanced rather indifferently.

"Hello, you are back!" said Tom. She marked the touch of appeal in his voice.

"No," she laughed, "I'm still in Liverpool," and the tender undertone of intimacy made him burn.

"Which part of you?" he asked.

Her heart leapt up in approval. She looked in his eyes, and for a second loved him.

"Why, what do you think?" she laughed.

He lifted his hat from his head with a distracted little gesture. She really liked him, liked his quaint ways, his humour, his innocence of life, and his fascinating masculinity. But, in her deeper self, she knew her own understanding far exceeded his; that he would not, could not, pioneer her into the inner, half-dreadful intimacy and experience, for which she yearned.

"Here, look here Tom Smedley," broke in Anne.

"A moudiwarp! you never was staunch enough to tackle it by yourselves, was you?" he teased.

"Well, it bit me," said Anne.

"Oh, I see. An' that got your rag out, did it?" he mocked.

"Don't you talk like that!" Anne scolded sharply.

"Oh, why mustn't I?"

"Because our Frances doesn't like it."

"Oh, I see, that's it, is it?"

He glanced in some sort of fussiness at Frances.

"I don't mind, Tom can talk as he pleases," Frances flashed. She was offended by his readiness to jump at intimacy. The vulgar speech did disgust her, moreover; for Jimmy, whom she had longed for, was so particular, such a gentleman. However, she remembered her resolve, and managed to add sweetly, smiling at Tom:

"Though I like you to talk *nicely* when I'm here."

"I see," he replied, again tilting his hat distractedly.

"And generally you *do*, you know," she smiled.

"I s'll have to try if I can manage it," he muttered.

"What?" she asked brightly.

"To talk nice to you," he said boldly, blushing deeply. Frances coloured furiously, bent her head for a moment, then laughed gaily, as if she liked this clumsy hint.

"Eh now, you mind what you're saying," cried Anne, giving the young man an admonitory pat.

"You wouldn't have to give yon mole many knocks like that," he teased, relieved to get on safe ground, rubbing his arm.

"No indeed, it died in one blow," said Frances, with a flippancy that cost her a great effort.

"I'll bet it did an' all," he replied, turning deferentially to her, and adding tenderly: "Well that was better than having ever so many goes at it, as you'd have had to do—shouldn't you?"

"Not if I was cross," she said decisively.

"No? I can't see you killing a mole, though," he replied, still with the tenderness of a lover.

"I could if I was cross," she retorted. "Or if it was necessary."

He was quick to seize his opportunity.

"And *isn't* it necessary?" he asked.

"We—ell—is it?" she drawled, laughing.

"It is to *me*," he replied, very weightily.

She laughed quickly.

"And does that say it is to *me*?" she asked.

"That's just as you please," he answered, humbly.

She did not care for his humility; yet anything else would have offended her.

"I see," she said; and there was an awkward pause.

"You'd like *me* to kill moles then, would you?" she asked, tentatively, after a while.

"They do us a lot of damage," he said.

"Well, I'll see the next time I come across one," she promised. Their eyes met, and the bond of intimacy was established between them. He felt troubled as he never had been before, excited, expectant, restless. She smiled as she departed.

"Well," said Anne, as the sisters went through the wheat stubble; "I don't know what you two's been jawing about, I'm sure."

"Don't you," laughed Frances, significantly.

"No, I don't. But, at any rate, Tom Smedley's a good deal better than Jimmy, so there—and nicer."

"Perhaps he is," said Frances.

And the next day, after a secret, persistent hunt, she found another mole playing in the heat. She killed it, and in the evening, when Tom came to the gate to smoke his pipe after supper, she took him the dead creature.

"Well, I've done it you see," she said.

"Ay, I see you have," he replied, taking the velvet corpse into his fingers and examining it minutely. This was to hide his trepidation.

"Did you think I shouldn't?" she asked, her face very near his.

"Well, I didn't know what to think."

She laughed in his face, a strange little laugh that caught her breath, all agitation, and tears, and appeal. He looked so helpless and wistful. She put her hand on his bare arm.

"Do you care for me?" he asked, in low, shame-faced tones.

She nestled her face on his bosom, with a shaky laugh. She badly wanted fondling, caressing, soothing. He caressed her very tenderly.

Poetry in Mexico

By Henry Baerlein

THE other day, in Mexico, I penetrated to the rather frigid hall in which the Library, the *Biblioteca Nacional*, is housed. Two lines of tables, down the centre of the room, accommodate the readers, and behind them, raised on little platforms, are the desks of the officials, while behind these gentlemen are sundry giant statues made to represent Descartes and Saint Paul (in very vivid attitude) and Dante and the rest of them. Behind these two white rows of giants are the bookshelves and some books. Unfortunately I began by running counter to the rules, for one of those officials limped across and pointed at my hat. He did not speak a word, and when I pleaded that the room was very cold, he said, "Sombrero," which is "Hat." He was a puny, wall-eyed Indian. "But you would not desire that I should take an illness? Nature has denied me——," and I showed him what is underneath my hat. However, there was no commiseration on his face. "Then you will be responsible," said I. "Sombrero," said the man. By this time all the readers—eight adults and two placid boys who happened to be chewing something—all the readers had their eye on us, and I perceived that this convention of the hat was generally followed, and the fact that I was sitting underneath the statue of Saint Paul had naught to do with it. I took my hat off, while the lame but satisfied official limped away. I followed him to ask if he would get me certain books of poetry. He bore me no ill-will. "Catálogo," said he. This catalogue is at the entrance of the room, beneath the Humboldt statue, and I should not care to know what Humboldt thinks of it. Although it is extremely small it baffles even those who are in charge, and my official started at the first page and laboriously let his black-nailed finger move down half-a-dozen pages. "Bring me any one of these four poets," I observed. "Then you had better occupy your seat," quoth he. They do not give you ink or pen or blotting-pad or paper-knife, and there is nothing that will serve for a

distraction, save a printed notice which is put in front of every reader. "*Those of the readers,*" so we may translate it, "*who are smokers are entreated to be good enough to make a proper use of the spitoons, so as not to soil the boards and to prevent a fire which the cigar ends might originate. Equally they are recommended not to place cigars, once they are lighted, on the tables.*"

Well, at any rate the library was careful of its treasures, and a functionary at the Foreign Office had discoursed to me upon this topic, saying very plausibly that armies and that navies do not demonstrate the culture of a people; it appeared to me that he was anxious to belittle navies and especially his own because forsooth it had transpired that many of the sailors suffer, when they put to sea, from Nelson's sorriest frailty, and that a recent storm had brought the stokers reeling on to deck with exclamations that the boat would founder, since the engines had begun to roll about. They should have known that this was not the kind of thing to get the better of their Scottish engineer, and anyhow the boat was built in Italy. But if the Foreign Office gentleman disparaged navies he was, like some others of his colleagues, great on poetry. "This demonstrates," he said, "our culture, that we cherish poetry." And it is not to be denied that they are adepts in the Foreign Office. Constantly while I was making my researches into the Republic's literature I was advised to question this or that official of the Foreign Office, and I never went in vain. The functionary I have quoted was assuring me that Mexico was civilised because of the attention which she gave her poets, and I wondered if she really did preserve them, dead or living, so religiously. "She slaughtered Covarrubias," I said.

"But that was on account of politics," the functionary answered. "No, they did not shoot him because he was a poet."

Could it be, then, that this land was so exceptional? Did she refuse to have her poets wither, like so many other poets, in the shade? I could not instantly believe it, and I went into the library in order that I might inquire into the lives of some of Mexico's regarded poets. As I watched the wall-eyed fellow toiling at the catalogue a feeling of oppression came upon me, for it augured very badly that in their own temple it should be so difficult to find the works. Surely my acquaintance of the Foreign Office had exaggerated when he said that here they are not treated with contempt. It would be an

unparalleled occurrence if the mention of the name of poet did not, in the vulgar mind, evoke indifference or worse. The wall-eyed one approached me, mumbling that the poems of Acuña, one of Mexico's chief writers, were not in the library. Well, in a guide-book I had read that Manuel Acuña's poems were enshrined in every patriotic heart, from El Paso to Yucatan, so that it was possibly thought futile, with the space so limited, to have his book inside the library.

"Which," I asked, "are his best poems?"

"*Quien sabe?*"

"But you must have an opinion," I persisted. "It is Manuel Acuña we are talking of."

"Look then, I would say," replied this man, "that often they are good and often they are not so good, and often they are *quien sabe.*"

Then, because he had maybe more urgent business, he abandoned me. I had wanted to read something of the poet and in front of me was nothing but these words: *Those of the readers who are smokers are entreated to be good enough to make a proper use of the spitoons.* . . However, it was not long ere another of the library's officials, one of higher standing, came to have some conversation with me. Don Jacinto had resemblance to the poet of the picture-book; his shirt was ragged and it had been blue; his haughty face was furnished with a Vandyck beard and he was passing dirty. But he leaned upon my desk and hearing that I was in search of poetry he did not hesitate to utter one of his unpublished works. The sound of it was quite sonorous and he undertook to give it me in writing. As he did not do so I have not been able to translate it. On the subject of Acuña he did not desire to speak; he told me that it would be well to go back to the Foreign Office. But I hasten to inform the lofty Mexican officials who will read these lines that all the subsequent long talks on literature I celebrated with the functionary were enacted in the Alameda or some other place, and out of office hours.

On a December evening when our feet made music in the Alameda's fallen leaves, and when the wind was rolling through the eucalyptus and the yellow ash-trees, it was natural that we should talk of Manuel Acuña. In December, 1873, on such an evening, he was walking with his dear friend, Juan de Dios Peza, and the book which they were reading was Hugo's *Les feuilles d'automne.* Presently Acuña picked a leaf up from the ground, to serve them as a

bookmark, and he saw that it was one which had been thrown down by the wind before its time. He was preoccupied, but not, apparently, more sad than usual when in the street of Santa Isabel he left his friend. "To-morrow come at one o'clock," he said; "come punctually." "If I should be a little late——?" "Then," said Acuña, "I shall go and shall not see you." Peza asked him whither he was going. "I am going on a journey," he replied; ". . . yes . . . a journey . . . you will know about it later." And the words fell on the soul of Peza as if they were drops of fire. Acuña left him and he stayed for some time in the street, well knowing that a chronic ailment of the poet might be near its crisis. And he went back very sadly to the Alameda, which is now a pleasure-ground and was the place in which the Inquisition used to burn its victims. As for Manuel Acuña, he did not go to his chambers in the School of Medicine till it was late. He tore and burned up many papers. On the next day he put all his room in order, and it is a curious coincidence that Juan Covarrubias, the poet who was shot at Tacubaya, had inhabited this very room which in the Inquisition days had been a cell, the present School of Medicine having been erected for the Holy Office. We may quote a stanza from Acuña's poem on his predecessor :—

Where earth provides a meagre hole
Your venerated shadow dwells
And, weary of its ancient spells,
The broken harp that is your soul.
No longer do the strings unroll
A song to love or fatherland,
But now your cenotaph is fanned
By wailing winds and by the long
Swell of the greatest in your song:
Those silences which understand.

It was the last day of Acuña's life. He went out to the bath. At twelve o'clock he came back to his room, and with a firm hand wrote these words: "The least important matter is to enter into details of my death; but it is nobody's concern, I think. Sufficient if I make it known that I am culpable and no one else." He went into the corridors, conversing casually with his friends. And Peza reached the place some minutes after one; a comrade had delayed him at the door. He found Acuña lying on his bed, as if asleep, a lighted candle near him. He had taken poison. Vainly did the doctors try to bring him back to life, but when he lay in state and the enormous crowd was paying homage he

appeared to weep, and this may have been due to the embalming or the tightness of his shroud. He always wept for the unfortunate, as we may see from *La Ramera* (The Prostitute), a poem that begins in this way :—

O, pigmy race of man,
You that proclaim the truth and Jesus Christ,
With many lies, pretending charity;
You that have got your hearts inflamed with pride,
Gaze up, ah! gaze away
From what is underneath your feet:
You that say tender words,
And spit upon the gipsy and the beggar,
And because one is a beggar, one a gipsy;
Look, there is that woman who is grieving, groaning,
For she has the burden of the women
Who march on through life, march on through darkness—
Spit there, too . . . .

Beside Acuña's grave one of the chief orators was Justo Sierra, whom the dead man loved profoundly. Sierra's verses were indifferent, but he was full of humour always, laughing at the verses and himself. He and Acuña had been wont to look into the distant days. "What will the world be doing," sang Acuña, " with my dreams?" (*Qué hará este mundo de los sueños mios?*) Sierra's dreams, so far as they were printed, we shall not repeat, for they were bad, and probably the reason why the President promoted him to be the Minister of Public Instruction was to ascertain whether a bad poet would make a good minister. The experiment was interesting, and one hoped that Don Porfirio was not discouraged.

Over Manuel Acuña's corpse they uttered words that should not be allowed to die : "The brain of light, the heart of fire. . . . It is no common mourning," said another, "but humanity's despairing cry at having lost a great apostle." It was not alone among the literary men—such as the club which he had founded, the Netzahualcoyotl—that his merits were acclaimed. All men who loved a song in Mexico vied with each other, so it seemed, in loving Manuel Acuña; and Saltillo where he had been born, Saltillo the chief town of the inhospitable northern State of Coahuila, built a theatre and called it after him. They have a splendid way of doing honour to a man in Mexico. No decorations are suspended round his neck, for it is thought to be undemocratic to have decorations. (True, they are willing to accept these things from foreign countries, but they do so, I presume, out of politeness.) What prevails is, either in the

lifetime of the patriot or afterwards, to add his name to that of any State or town which may be thought appropriate. Thus, in official documents, Campeche is entitled Campeche de Baranda after a distinguished magnate of that name, and if the person to be honoured was, in the opinion of his countrymen, a factor necessary to the building of what some of them believe is a Republic, then his name is given pure and simple to a State, such as Hidalgo. They did not add "de Acuña" to Saltillo or to Coahuila, but they built his monument, the theatre, in the form of a lyre. . . . So much of reverence and admiration were his lot that scarcely any favourable attribute could be imagined, but was fastened to his chariot. And one really cannot blame the critics if in their exasperation they allowed themselves to imitate the worshippers, if when they saw that everything was claimed for him they did not, as calm Anglo-Saxon critics do, permit the poet to remain in undisturbed possession of his real merits. Not that in the end it matters, as there are at least two ways of annexing an island : one of them is to annex an island and another way is to seize an archipelago and be content to lose it all, except one island. If all sublimity did not belong to Manuel Acuña, if at times he was of the materialists, yet we may not describe him as a hope-forsaken poet. He had something of the sublime, something of the material, and more of hope than many of us. In his poem *Esperanza* (Hope) these lines occur :—

It is the hour when you should fain
  Make for the blue with haughty wing;
It is the hour for you to live again;
  It is the hour for you to sing.
Oh, take your torches that are cold,
  Renew their pallid flame, set them above
Your altar and unlock the temple's gate
  For one who stands there in the name of love.

Depose, aye fling aside the load
  Of tears, the bitter fruitless dew,
    And in the gladness slanting from the sky,
There in the light of solace, your abode,
  Salute the future that awakens you.

Now stand up confident beneath the sky,
  No longer in the gloomy places grope;
    Bid the supreme farewell to sorrow's state
    And once again with garlands decorate
  The ruins of the altar of your hope.

* * * * * *

Let suns invade your night,
  Your face let smiles begem
Whereof the angels have had ne'er a sight
  Since from the cradle you did talk to them.

Perhaps the truth about him—but how can we select a better critic than a Latin-American of Saxon or of Celtic origin, Señor MacDonall? "If in the search for truth his spirit sometimes doubted," says MacDonall, "he was ready always to face the world with a noble, loving and compassionate heart. He was a poet of the heart, wounded by memories of childhood. His images are novel, and his thought audacious, from the suave he leaps to the satiric, from the beautiful to the jocose. And as in his ideas he is advanced, so in the form he gives to them is he courageous." He has been held up, in fact, to odium because he does not see to it that the cæsura is invariably where the metre wants it. He was as impatient of restraint as was Lassalle whom in appearance, with the lofty brow, the pioneer's undaunted aspect, he resembled. He was ever burning to inquire the cause of things, he pulled up by the roots those artificial flowers of pietists, he doubted. Here is one of the short poem of the series called "Dry Leaves":—

It is your wish that I believe.
Ah, what else would you have me do?
When I behold you then I cleave
To God, for I believe in you.

But if he doubted it is very far from true to say that he despised what other men believe in and respect. He knows that if a people have no education they do not deserve their freedom, they cannot be free. He venerates the teacher, while he utters words of exhortation for the pupil. Many of his songs are consecrated to the family, the home, to recollections of early childhood. Thus in *Lagrimas* (tears) which he wrote in memory of his father, we may take these lines:—

You fell . . . the parchments of the night
I cannot read;
And in the tomb, your dwelling place,
I know not whether love can dwell . . .
I know not if the dead
Can stretch their hands towards the sun;
But in the gloomy coil
Of serpents prisoning my heart
I know that somewhere is a little flame
That stretches out for you and lives for you . . .
I know that of all names the sweetest name
Is that I call you by,
And you —— you are the god whom I adore,
In the religion of my memory.

The Foreign Office functionary and myself were walking up and down the Alameda; but the evening had faded

quickly into night, as it is wont to do in Mexico, and where the fallen leaves had been red, brown and yellow, they were black. "And do you think," I asked, "that Manuel Acuña is remembered still?"

The functionary turned his head and through the darkness stared at me.

It was twenty-eight years from the poet's death, and his old mother in Saltillo was about to die. The theatre called after him had been destroyed by fire, and she had lived to see another one erected in its place, beside a plaza where the trees are thickly crowded and you positively have to shout, so gorgeous is the singing of the birds. This other house was not called after Manuel but after the proprietor, who takes his ease at sunset just outside the theatre and listens to the birds.

"I am very sad to hear it," said the functionary.

But this naming of the theatre was settled by the townsfolk. Many of them voted for Acuña and a large number for the other man.

My functionary threw his hand out. "Be so kind as to reflect," said he. "Saltillo does not own our poet. And have you forgotten what he says about the gipsy and the beggar, whom so many people spit on? That is how the miserable place Saltillo treats her poet. What does it matter?"

And I had not forgotten the library, the *Biblioteca Nacional*, from which the poet's works were absent, and if no attention was paid to him a great deal was paid to the people who spit.

"We have some other parts of Mexico," said my companion, "which do greater honour to the great. The Territory of Quintana Roo, for instance, whom is it called after but Don Andrés?"

"Who was a statesman. Every child knows that he fought against the Spaniards from his chair, that he presided at the Congress of Chilpancingo, where the country's independence was declared; that he became a deputy, a senator, a diplomat, and president of the Court of Justice. He did all that for the nation."

"Very well, and he wrote poems. Of course," said the functionary, in a tone of voice which made me listen, "they were not native poems such as the General Riva Palacio recommends. You know the General was a good writer and once, when he was satirising a friend of his, he said that

our poets ever speak of nightingales and larks, gazelles and hyacinths, without venturing to give place in their doleful ditties to the cuitlacoche, nor to the zentzontl, nor to the cocomitl, nor to the yoloxochitl. The poems of Quintana Roo are classic. Have you ever seen his portrait?"

"I would sooner see his poems."

He was like an old Norwegian farmer, stern and steadfast, only that there was a mocking laugh about his lips. And of the poems which he wrote—but which we have no room to quote—I think the best one is the *Diez y seis de Septiembre.*

Judging from the works that were produced when he was living his example was essential to the welfare of the country. Not to mention more than one of these we may pick something from the pen of José M. Moreno y Buenvecino, who composed his "fabulas" with the object of censuring feminine defects and to give advice to women. He also wrote invective against the bad poets, etc. At Puebla, in 1823, he published his *America mexicana libre*, an allegoric drama in two acts and in verse. The characters are five in number, viz., America, Victory, Echávarri and Morán (Mexican generals), and Despotism. There is a chorus of ladies and soldiers.

It is deplorable that patriotic verse should sometimes be so bad. All writing cannot always be spontaneous, yet surely Pegasus should not be whipped when he is on a patriotic errand. How was Guillermo Prieto to continue for a matter of eight hundred pages and be unfatigued? The heroes of the Independence called to him, as they were lying in neglect, but he was nearly seventy years of age. Hidalgo and Morelos and their comrades had been sung, indeed, while yet the noble blood was racing through their veins, but all the songs were rude, rough numbers, chiefly written by the lower clergy, and it is now many years since even in the mountains of Guerrero, the last refuge, they were lost. As for the higher clergy, they in common with the merchants leaned to Spain, and we who look at their activities can hardly think that they were instruments of the Supreme Wisdom. Nobody knows more than we do that it is a facile business to be judging people after the event, but had we flourished at the time we surely would have asked the merchants if it was advisable to fight for union with a country which prevented them from trading with all other countries; temerarious as it may sound we hope we

should have asked the higher clergy if in their opinion it was prudent to have no restraint upon the Inquisition : that enthusiastic body charged Hidalgo with committing every crime it knew of, such as sorcery, seduction and polygamy. . . . . So, too, the movement which took place in 1821 was not unanimous enough for epic poetry ; more ink indeed was spent than blood, but both of them were doled out by the aristocracy. There was, among the leaders of this second movement, little tenderness for the surviving champions of the first revolt. Quintana Roo was persecuted and Guerrero killed and poets would have found it perilous to celebrate the days of 1810. And thus it was until the coming of the Emperor, who commonly is charged with having been a pampered person, one who did not know and did not wish to know the people's heart. In September, 1864, he solemnised the *grito*, that is to say the war-cry, of the patriot Hidalgo from the very window in Dolores, just as now the President of the Republic celebrates it annually from a window of the National Palace. In 1865 the Emperor put up a statue to Morelos, it being his centenary, and he himself delivered the oration. But unluckily the poets still refused to sing ; they said that they could not forget how cruel and how impious had been the pioneers. If such a standard, though, had been erected by all other poets we should be the poorer far. Achilles dragging Hector three times round the walls of Troy assuredly was impious, and Camoens did not think that he could reasonably be requested not to write the Lusiad because there was some cruelty about the glorious achievements of Vasco da Gama. This hero's expedition was unpopular in Portugal, as were the actions of Hidalgo and his comrades in the Mexico of Maximilian, and I will not claim that the commanders should be quite exonerated from the odium attaching to the Guanajuato slaughter, for example—when 247 defenceless Spaniards were assassinated—as the leaders of an army are not slow to take the credit for some gallantry their nameless followers accomplish, and they cannot have it both ways. In 1865 Hidalgo was regarded by the poets as unclean ; in 1885 Prieto wrote the *Romancero Nacional*, and nowadays—thanks partly to Prieto, partly to the Latin-Americanism which will either travel all the way or stop at home—Hidalgo is regarded nowadays as something near to the divine. Guillermo Prieto has been called the laureate of Mexico, and not because he was the greatest poet but the

most national. His *Musa Callejera* (Curbstone Idylls) has preserved for us the picturesque and lurid types of yesterday. In prose or verse Prieto was voluminous, and after toying with a playful fancy he would write upon finance. But being old he turned aside his steps from both these charming groves and lived laborious days, in order to produce that which a brotherhood of burning poets should have given to their country, a collection of eight hundred pages of patriotic verse. All honour to the man, who with his white hair and his lofty brow, his eyes that looked so keenly through the spectacles, would have presented the appearance of a German savant if the lips had been less bulky. Pushing out between the small beard and the cavalry moustache they lent the lower portion of the face a sensual aspect, while the upper part expressed intelligence, and over both of them there was a veil of suffering. Eight hundred pages !—and the first and second poem seem to promise that he will not lack in vigour, since he starts by telling Bonaparte that he is full of infamy and guile, proceeding to address him as *aborto del inferno*. It is rather impious and cruel if we quote a weaker passage in the old man's volume, one of those when he was palpably fatigued. So let us have it done as soon as may be and translate some lines out of the "Second Romance of San Miguel the Great" :—

Then Hidalgo on arrival
Put up in Landeta's dwelling,
Ordered them to seize Isasi,
As for Barrio to seize him.
In the streets the military
Give themselves to creature comforts,
And Hidalgo, not maintaining
Order, is charged with imprudence.
But some argue that with order
You do not make revolutions.
Some are anxious to have fighting
But with precepts and a compass;
Others think that it is easy
To command a raging tempest.
All of us are good at hissing,
Very few will face a bull.

The pity of it that when Prieto's pen was working thus he did not happen to be occupied upon a dissertation in finance. But there are many pages of the patriotic volume that reveal the poet. Here, for instance, is a passage from the "First Romance of Guanajuato" :—

Darksome labyrinths and caverns,
Mountain tops and viewless valleys,
Such are Guanajuato's streets.
And the houses are suspended
In the sky, there is no passage
Forward, backward; only two ways
Can you travel: up hill, down hill.
Going up hill you must clamber,
Going down the city curving,
Winding, is like such a person
Who is ever undecided
Whence to gaze upon a picture.

Anyone who has seen Guanajuato will acknowledge that this is an excellent description. But before we take our leave of the old singer of the glories and the hopes of Mexico, the popular and fertile poet, we must give as best we can some lines out of an ode of his that were recited at a blind school at the distribution of the prizes. Dealing with a man who wrote so much, and who could sometimes be so flat as when (resembling a notorious line of Wordsworth) he produced his—

Don José de Bustamante,

we shall be more worthy of the name of critic if, as with the English poet, we refuse to look at a considerable portion of his work. If these two minstrels in their long, productive lives came out into the public air at times quite heedless of their singing robes we have, it seems to me, the right to call them both ridiculous if we do not cut a ridiculous appearance with a robe like theirs upon our shoulder. We who cannot build an ark should have the decency to turn aside from Noah's nakedness. When Guillermo Prieto spoke in plazas or upon a hill they listened to him always with attention, and it is unlikely that he ever had an audience more grateful than was that to whom he spoke these lines:

Ye orphans of the light, raise up your heads.
O that a sun may dawn in your unending night!
Behold the darkness that is furled
About you and that seems to cling
To you and to divide you from the world!
It is a veil that angels bring,
With solemn mystery,
To guard and keep you free
From earth, to keep you close to heaven where you belong.
Dark is the void
Wherein the orders of the Eternal roll,
And wisdom august, unalloyed,
Even as the sun illuminates the soul.

Like to the kisses of the dew
That sparkle on the lips of you,
Such is the light. A delicate melody,
The song of children or a dirge,
They speak of what shall always be
And make the breast of lovers surge
With infinite content—
Such is the light. As of a wandering scent
The mild caress,
Or as a dove's long lullaby
That is to lovers all the tenderness,
As there will reach into your stormy soul
A rumour of the waves in play,
Such is the light . . . and those who walk the way
Of man but in a darker gloom
Shall see more clearly from their tomb
The light of everlasting day. . . .

We have spoken of Prieto in connection with an English poet. His biographer, Altamirano, meditating on the fact that literature did not have to be born in Mexico when she achieved her independence, as the art of what they called New Spain was subject all through the colonial period to conditions not so different from those prevailing in the motherland, to drive his point well home Altamirano says that the essentially American verse of Longfellow does not differ from Chaucer and Shelley. But although I see it stated that some people have exceeded this Guerrero Indian in erudition, he surpassed them all in the ability to hand on his acquirements to his pupils. He was an extraordinary man, who till the age of fourteen had no Spanish. Of the humblest origin he ranged the woods of Tixtla, stoning birds and fighting with the species he belonged to. This was not considered to include the Spanish boys, *los de razon* or *seres de razon* (reasonable beings), whereas he was one of the *gente intratable* (intractable folk). And in the school to which he went at last, the Spanish and the native boys were separated and were given different instruction. He was made acquainted with the catechism and with reading, which is more than many of his countrymen are taught to-day, but notwithstanding is inadequate. He had to thank his father for permission to be educated with the reasonable beings, for his father rose to be alcalde and the school-master was bubbling over with congratulations and was in the mood for granting this or any other favour. Presently a law was passed which summoned Indian boys of application and ability to have their education finished at Toluca in the Literary Institute. He went in 1849, took many prizes and became librarian, began to write in prose and verse and was ejected, with some others, on account of

being liberal in politics. He found a refuge in a private college at Toluca, where he gave French lessons in return for roof and board. And after this began a life of wandering, full of vicissitudes; now he would charge himself with teaching village louts, to-morrow he would be a dramatist (presenting on a small, provincial stage for one performance his *Morelos en Cuautla*; in response to the applause he thrust his head—an ugly head at best—out of the prompter's box), and then retiring to the mountains he was lost in love's first (and unhappy) dream. He was secretary to Don Juan Alvarez, that venerable firebrand, most immaculate of liberals; and then he came to Mexico, the capital, where in the college of Letrán, he set himself to legal studies. This was in 1857, and his rooms became the office of a newspaper, of a reforming club and of a literary group. He used to listen in the Congress while they made the Constitution; as he listened he would suffer all the gamut of despair and hope. And all this for the present Constitution, which is studied, I presume, by students of the history of Mexico. Our indefatigable friend had time to write *The Bandits of the Cross*, in alexandrines, and to improvise with Manuel Mateos, on a fountain's rim, tremendous verse against the Government. He took himself off to Guerrero when the war broke out, and in *El Eco de la Reforma* fought the clergy with his pen, while with the sword he was engaged in several successful actions. He was made, for his disinterested services, a deputy, and in a celebrated speech stood up against the amnesty. This wild-haired orator, a man of 27 years, seemed terrible and menacing. He cried in a storm of passion for the punishment of two of the enemy, "whose skulls should now be white upon their staff." About this time he wrote *Las Amapolas* (The Poppies), wherein a youth gives such a luring picture of the scenery that she who listens to him merely answers with a smile:

All the world is sighing, sighing,
  It is in a languid case,
Drowsily the world is lying,
Bird and wave and wind are dying
  In the desolated place.

Now the butterflies do keep
  To the river-bank, their bed;
Roses fold themselves in sleep
While the shadows love to creep
  Round each rosy, hanging head.

Now the floripondios fainting
  Beg the mango-trees for shade,
But the cruel sun is tainting
Green woods with her yellow painting,
Woods of lime and myrtle made.

See, the poppies are so white
  From the poniards of the sun,
Yet they will be clothed in light,
They bathe where crystals taking flight,
  Across the sleepy waters run.

The boy who speaks these words and she who listens lose themselves among the palms and come out as the day is fading:

All in the tranquil eve
Returns again to life;
Amid the merry noises
Of the south-wind rushing past
One hears harmonious music
Of the waves that rise and fall.

"I am a son of the mountains of the south and I descend," the poet cried—his audience of deputies was trembling—"I descend from those old men of iron who preferred to live on roots and dwell amid the savage animals than to incline their brow before the tyrants. . . . I have not come here to bargain with reactionaries or to grow more mild amid the softness of the capital." His fame was in all people's mouth. This Danton of America was banished, since his fiery eloquence proved too exciting for the citizens. He took part, as a colonel, in the War of Intervention. Thus he gained a victory in 1866 at Tierra Blanca when he took a convoy and three hundred prisoners. A few days later he inflicted a defeat upon Carranza, the imperialist. He won much glory, so they tell us, at Querétaro in 1867, and he was hailed in the despatches as a hero. When the war was over he established, with his pay, a newspaper: *El Correo de México*, and subsequently about five other papers. He was president of the Supreme Court of Justice, he organised the "Normal School," at which he worked so hard that he contracted his last illness. As it settled down upon him he withdrew from his activities and took the post of Consul-General at Barcelona. When he came before a great assemblage of the poets and the writers, taking leave of them he was so deeply moved that "Here," he said, "here is an orator you have exalted, one who cannot speak." But he could sing:

Ten years ago, when that I bade farewell
To you, my mother, I was but a child,
And now my sorrows are beguiled
By dreaming how your kisses fell—
They were the music of the dew,
They were the singing soul of you.
Upon my knees I fling me forward and
From here I worship the delightful land,
The lofty palm, the manglar's gorgeous dome,
The birds that sing me and the flowers awake,
The cataracts of careless foam
Which on the river's bosom break,
And the magic-scented breeze
That wanders from the shadow of your trees.
Now, very soon, my mother, I shall be
With you on that dark hill, if God desire,
And near the Cross we loved I shall aspire
To pray, as once, in sweet humility.

* * * * *

I shall forget the fury of my dreams,
And one by one there will be trooping back
My childish fancies—and how near it seems,
The little house by yon remembered track!
Then with my head upon your shoulder, love,
I shall disclose to you the broken day,
My weary waiting you will watch above,
My tears will be bright bubbles for your play.
Then my grey doubts, my fearing will depart,
The relics of the sorrowed life I bore—
Oh, that I were beside you, gentle heart,
Unhappy woman—woman I adore.

* * * * *

He stayed for several months in Barcelona and was ill so that he was removed to Paris. He was ailing constantly and ailing on account of all the miles of land and water which divided him from his beloved Guerrero. When he died, in February 1893, he left instructions that his body should be burned, as was the custom of his Aztec ancestors. He left his poems to the manglars of Guerrero and the careless cataracts, so that it is not needful for them to be in the Library.

The New Sesame and Lilies.

By Austin Harrison

When I was a small boy it was my good fortune to sit at the feet of a beautiful lady, gowned, festooned one ought perhaps to say, in a sumptuous Walter Crane design, the exact colour of the cushions and the wall-paper. She sat, like the pictures of Circe I always thought, and spun miracles; at any rate, what I do know is that for an hour every third day in the week after luncheon, she read to me "Sesame and Lilies," and descanted upon its teaching. We were all Pre-Raphaelites then. I was—my hair cut long like the Cavaliers, clad in a gaberdine which the boys in Kensington Gardens would throw mud at; and though a good deal of "Sesame" seemed to me rather "pie jaw," it was an æsthetic education.

Alas, for vogues and fashions! The glory of Ruskin has departed, vain now as the vapours of our grandmothers. The Kate Greenaway youth is to-day a Boy Scout. Gilbert's "Howell and James young man" is scratch—or thereabouts. The Boudoir Lily, more enterprising than Pantomime Aladdin, is herself the sesame of all men.

Prophetic Ruskin! And it is all quite true, as magicians say, and may be known by two very notable facts which are: first, that Mr. Lloyd George has gone in for the "new feminism," and, secondly, that a young and perfectly sane woman has married a man whom, at the altar, she publicly, by sin of omission, refused to obey.

This is the spirit of John Hampden. She will love and honour, but she will not "obey." What would my Circe of five-and-twenty years ago have said to her? What are we to say to her now? For it is hard on us poor Pre-Raphaelite survivals, hard on man who is naturally a misologist in all that concerns the brain power and development of woman. We pigmies, we Epigoni, we do not understand why women, who in China have broken their toes for so many thousands of years for us, should not go on doing so as mechanically

as some men break stones by the wayside; why all who have worn rings through their ears and noses, and on their fingers, should discontinue the practice, as if the world was not full enough already of blarney, babble and bunkum.

Cleopatra gave herself and all the riches of the Nile to miserable Mark Antony. Good Queen Bess was very glad of Sir Walter's cloak one nationally muddy afternoon. Salome danced; Fatima sat on the watch-tower; Cinderella in the kitchen, and they waited patiently for deliverance, apparently with the approval of the world's makers and chroniclers. So thought Solomon, who was reckoned wise enough in his day, Moses, Mahomet, King Hal, who knew something about wives; mad Russian Peter who created modern Russia; many a Pasha, western and eastern, of many a tale, and how many billions of noble men before and since. If woman is not going to man the Dreadnought, what has she to do with its steering gear? Why this sex revolt, this craze to upset the cloister on the hearth, the hearth and the rug—all the Lares and privacies, the domesticity, the very sanctity that form the immemorial symbol and foundation of the matrimonial estate?

It isn't so much the fact of woman having the power to help this rich Tory or that good Liberal into the House that man, *quâ* man, objects to, but rather the utter subversion of established ideas about the relations between woman and man that the new woman now openly advocates as her policy. Women, who are by nature conservative and so extremists, have really frightened men with their revolutionary aspirations and programmes, which demand not only full political and economic equality but freedom of both mind and body. This, obviously, is no political question. Certainly the possession of the paper vote will not solve it. It is a biological subject, sociological, physiological, eugenic, anything except political, just as the establishment of a gynecocracy is, humanly considered, unthinkable as any future condition of civilisation. All that part of the programme may be put aside as mere talk and propaganda, and, after all, the propaganda is the thing, as all men know who have had anything to do with electioneering.

Naturally the whole idea of woman entering public life (though she may enter the public-house) is disturbing, as

are her methods profoundly distressing. But it is no use for man to play Hamlet any longer. It is woman who now wants to be. She has dared damnation—she dares man. Somehow the gyves that were once her graces have fallen from her. Commercialism, the brutal laws of wage-earning necessity which are the driving-power of modern life, have taught her to cast off the corset of inactivity in which, since primeval sin, the sex has been laced so tightly in subjection. It is this iron Moloch of industry that has blasted the trammels of her sex, forcing her into the modern arena of competition, freeing her, teaching her to fend and find for herself. The whole movement is essentially a sign of the times, of the unrest eating into what are called the established conditions of peoples of all countries, the inevitable product of an age that is rapidly losing not only faith but the very hope of faith, and whose need as divinity is money. It is the offspring of Socialism, which, in turn, is the direct bastard of capitalism.

As a fact, the emancipation of woman is far more advanced abroad, though not politically, because foreign women are not particularly interested in a game which we in England unfortunately consider so very dignified and essential. In France, for instance, the rule of woman is an admitted fact, and anyone who knows Paris is aware how far more cultured and interested in interesting things the Parisian woman is than the average society woman over here. Half the work of France is actually performed by women who are far more thrifty than ours and quite as good mothers. In Scandinavia and Finland the emancipation of women is a fact. I should not like to have to answer an examination paper set me by a girl matriculate of Helsinfors University, or try a swing with a Swedish girl on the trapeze. Gretchen, too, is a very advanced young woman. The German Backfisch no longer sits with Heine in her lap, and her only ideal—moustaches, the uniform, matrimony and maternity. She reads everything, is given a six months' hospital course of first aid and anatomy, talks Wedekind, Huxley, Bergson in three languages, has spent six months in a cookery school, and can argue about vaccination, torpedoes, Brahms, race culture and what not as well as Fanny in her "First Play." In Russia she is even more advanced and would horrify the Lord Chamberlain. Even in Turkey women cast off their veils, though they were packed up again in the harem. As

for manual labour, go to Poland, Russia, Central Europe, Austria, Germany, if any man wants to see how women can work. In these places they are the very hewers and drawers of toil; they plough the earth, they work like any navvy in this island. They don't want the vote because they have no time to think about such an abstract proposition what with their work and motherhood and the inevitable cares of the home.

The tendency of both propagandist and opponent to talk pimples is, of course, inevitable; the male man naturally preferring a womanly woman, and the extremes being thus inherently hostile to a cause which is in spirit Epicene. We hear of the palingenesis of women, as we used to hear of the millennium of Marxian Socialism, a theory that has long since been abandoned. On the other hand we have visions of Platonism; nightmares of a future estate, of an implacable feminine polity, in which there will be no sentiment or sentimentality, no poetry or romance, love or mystery of woman, not even folly, in short, an England blighted of youth and joy; leading to agamy, and even to sterility. And, of course, it is aggravating for men who have lived their lives to be lectured by young women who have not yet been mothers about sex education and race culture, and to be told that man knows nothing about mankind. It is the new Sesame and Lilies.

Are English women so unfitting themselves to be themselves that they are now fit to be of the fittest? Are they so tired of being the most exquisite creation in the world—woman—that they must needs covet what nature purposely denied to them: the physical force of the hunting sex? Is the possession of the brain and the ordinary intelligence of an usher or an actuary nobler or better than that of motherhood? Oppose, come into the market with, man and you oppose nature; but against nature neither we nor the beasts of the air or of the field can avail. Break down the illusion of your sex and you will destroy the illusion of man, which is at once your cataphract and glory. And so on, and I pick up "Sesame" for its lilies.

Platitudes, the new Dora answers me. "Poor boy, are you still sentimentalising over these muffin solecisms about woman and her subjection to man, her duty of motherhood,

obedience, frailty, her powder puff domesticity and inefficiency. Know, then, that all this has changed with the coming of the new, capable girl. Know, then, that she is no longer content to be the slave of man's whims and eccentricities. A Vardon cleek for your 'illusion!' We have done with the mystery of 'ribbons and laces and sweet pretty faces.' We want freedom, equality, the right to control what we are made to pay for. We have to earn wages, to run about London in the slush and rain, to teach, work, struggle and economise, and we demand liberty. The house-key, of course, we have. We want the key of Government and Westminster."

Now when Dora talks to me like that, even when she is really pretty and nicely dressed, I always say to her this: "My dear young lady, I would much rather meet Ruth walking with a straight back and a pitcher balanced upon her head than see her to-day, muscular and rubicund, 'haying' a man's room in some smart country house week-end rag. Apparelled like the spring, woman is god-like; and a man, if he is a man, will follow her to the death; but not so this vociferous, self-assertive, combative, neuter woman, who would be a drone rather than a mother." And when this is said, I invariably get the same rap back, be it from new Ruth or Rosalind. "There you are," the reply comes to me. "Motherhood again. As if women were born into the world solely for the office of mothers."

This retort always makes me unhappy. It is foolish, weak, no doubt, but I cannot help it. We men always say we would like to be mothers. Now women won't believe us any more. I stand up to Dora bravely on this question of Ruskin's platitudes. I tell her about the Circe of my childhood, about my gaberdine, about the great Victorian age, and she answers—"Whiskers!"; and I am silenced, remembering the portraits of my family. What is an ordinary fellow to do? If I talk to her of my athletic triumphs, she bores me with an exact account of the number of girls in England sweated on a starvation wage. If I fall back upon the Madonna she frivolously informs me that there are other miracles in the world besides the one in Addison Road; and the greatest of all, the emancipation of woman, has yet to be. And such talk sets me thinking about the old Italians and their Madonnas, and how far

more beautiful their works look on the walls of churches, for which they were painted, than they do in museums against the coloured wall-papers of, say, our own National Gallery.

I take Dora there sometimes and I show her the Greuzes, the Spanish faces, the Madonnas, the fine English types, the Lady Hamiltons, and I used to say: "Well, will you produce such beauty when the sex is free?" but now I know better, because my remark invariably leads to a scientific disquisition on eugenics and the improvement of the race, and usually ends with my practically agreeing that if men and women did study the laws of nature and beauty scientifically, possibly a quite superb race might be evolved, surpassing all imagination. Pointing to the Botticellis, the babies and cherubim of the old Madonnas, I say now: "Jolly kids, aren't they, Dora," and sometimes it seems to me the shaft goes home. But coming out there is always that confounded policeman, and he seems to remember Dora and smiles a little reminiscently at her, it seems to me, and after that it is no use talking about "schools" and Veroneses or dimpling children any more.

"I hit him on the nose once," says Dora, and then I tremble at the electric affinity of the race. What are we coming to? What does this sex war mean?

With fear no man ever won woman or anything else; with fear no courageous movement will be stopped. It is obviously the wisest thing for men to realise that Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies" stands in much the same ratio to the modern woman as Donizetti to Strauss. It is significant that the women's movement is essentially an English thing, that it flourishes here as in no other country, though so far as labour and economic conditions are concerned the position of women on the Continent is infinitely more "emancipated." To be quite plain, it is the fact that a French woman has more influence over her man than an English woman has, and that her sex performs half the mental and manual work of the country. The cause of this feminine upheaval in our British life is due to the tremendous interest taken by us in what are called politics. We see in politics the panacea of all evils, no doubt because we are a people of action, while theory, abstract thought and the culture of the arts is foreign to our commercial nature. To be a

politician in England is a far bigger thing than to be a good painter for instance, a good musician or sculptor. And though there is less oratory, less good speaking in England than in any country in Europe (except Germany), the tub-thumper, the street-corner quack, the after-dinner speaker, the lawyer-wind-bag it is who holds the ear and eye of the public, so that the politician who can let off a few squibs and epigrams is almost as big a hero as the fashionable musical-comedy actress of the day, and very much for the same reasons.

It explains "some" at any rate. What women want is hardly politics at all. It is political economy But they have been wise enough to see that as politics is the chief topic of conversation in England, petticoat pleading is no good at all unless there is a party faction behind it to do the push and scramble. From this point of view, they are, no doubt, perfectly right. Magna Carta was politics; Cromwell was politics; Jack Cade, Guy Fawkes, the Peers —these men were politics; Higgs, Stiggins, Briggs—they are all in politics. The fount of Toryism is the drawing-room; of Liberalism, that religious conscience; of Socialism, hunger. Now that women have discovered that their smile is not omnipotent it has disappeared, like Mona Lisa, gone with that rising young barrister and the Lady Persephone into the fighting line of politics.

On the whole, it is clever of her, and, as a diversion to the Insurance muddle, very opportune to the Chancellor. But is it really so serious, so weighty, of such grave moment? There is no humour in politics, we know, yet surely this Suffrage campaign, which threatens to divide the country, our homes, and the very Cabinet, it cannot be so terrible as the politicians, those earnest people who instruct us from platforms, make out. Think of Mr. Chamberlain's prophecies at the beginning of the century, and then look at the record statistics of trade of the last year! Think of the loaf campaign—the big and little loaf juggle, not the standard bread affair—the Die-Hards' valediction, the astounding fact that the "Rads" have not sold England, lock stock and barrel, to Switzerland or Siberia; remember the awful things we said about one another, the political argumentations we had, and then consider how little it all mattered, how singularly little of it even was true, how

while the Conservatives were fighting for their very game preserves, Mr. F. E. Smith was quietly playing golf with Mr. Winston Churchill.

As matter of fact, to claim that women would vote more callously, unintelligently, or "boozily" than men do is mere blarney, because the experiment has not yet been tried. To argue that Miss Arabella of Mayfair, who runs three separate establishments, drives a car and shoots pheasants, would vote less sensibly than Thomas, her gardener, is obviously a bit "thin." If fear of on what side women would vote is the main deterrent, then plainly it is the worst of arguments for man to cherish. To say that women would vote solid this way or that is foolish—men don't, and nor would women. Putting politics aside, looking at the thing humanly, it is difficult to believe that female suffrage would cause social revolution, or any startling change whatever; that Westminster would be duller, less representative, less business-like than it is to-day, or that there would be more or less danger of war, trusts, disarmament, taxes, bad speeches, bad acting, bad books, bad taste or bad manners than exist to-day with the tacit approval of man; that women would be either much better or much worse; that either prince, peer, priest, publican, profligate or Republican would find life less interesting or beautiful than in the *cosmos* of man's monopoly.

Chanticleer need not be downhearted because the modern Lily wants a vote. There is always the superb, the astounding common-sense of Englishmen to reckon with; that mysterious fund of strength that has made our vast Empire. When the mass of Englishmen make up their minds things get done swiftly, irrevocably, but not till then. The women must remember that. And we strong men, we fathers of families and talking political K.C.'s, we can remember that so long as there are mothers in the world there will be sunshine, and that so long as there are children there will be hope—hope which is the youth of life. The movement may, after all, be merely a political *potin* symptomatic, rather than significant, of the times, but the indices point to the contrary. In one sense the virilescence of women would seem to imply the emasculation of men.

In another it would seem to point to a certain derangement of the laws and functions of life.

It may be that civilisation is trending towards a third sex, a sex of workers who will be lone and motherless There is unquestionably a type of woman to-day who, physically and mentally, seem to have a neuter soul and philosophy; discontented with the conditions of their sex yet eager and able to work. If so, they will evolve their own metamorphosis, be there the suffrage or not. Such women will not be for men. But we must remember that it is the economic conditions of the age that are forcing this type into the world, and that in France, where the number of children in a family is regulated, such an anomaly hardly exists, for she has no economic justification. Economically the English revolt of women is a quasi-vindication of Malthus. Our national dislike of order, system, control, administration leads to individualism, but it also leads to multiplicity. Were there a numerical preponderance of men in England the women's movement would be almost unthinkable. It exists because the natural proportion of man to woman has got disturbed; because the modern conditions of labour have driven women out of the sanctuary of the home as bread-winners, as combatants in the struggle for life; because everywhere the thraldom of the purdah is doomed.

I cannot find it in my heart to take alarm. One of the gentlest creatures I ever knew was a Russian girl of nineteen, who sat for the greater part of the day in a cellar, manufacturing bombs. Politicians will, of course, get excited, and talk to us a great deal about the subject, but somehow I can get up little enthusiasm for the cause, which, when all is said and done, is the concern of women alone. I know I sometimes ask a very clever lady's advice when a talented writer submits a rather startling modern literary piece, and if that lady had the vote I cannot believe that England would be a penny the worse. Indeed if it were not for all this nauseous political business, this physical force parade, the woman's movement would be a rational affair enough, which a good many men would support. On education, the human and moral teaching of children, on matters of eugenics, hygienics, hospitals, on the laws bearing on taxation, the poor, the nation, and Empire, women might certainly have an articulate

voice. That they do so in France is the genius of the French woman. In the absence of that genius here, perhaps the solution will be found in a female Upper House.

The whole thing is part of the revolution that broke over England at the crisis of the Boer War. Since then much scoria has been sifted from the national mind. Whole traditions have come crashing to the ground. New estimates have arisen, new forces, new principles, new codes. We have started, as it were, again; and with the disappearance of the last remnant of political feudalism there has come the new force of woman, automatically, as if to take its place. That is the incontrovertible aspect of the Suffrage Movement. When women are serious they are often far more serious than men are; they are serious now. In theory one would say that the more people there are who feel themselves responsible for the governance and safety of our Empire, the safer the Empire should be. Conscious citizenship is not a danger.

It sounds, of course, terrible enough, this co-sex administration idea, but if women want to "take off their coats," so to speak, to up and do and scurry with the world's hustlers instead of minding what we have hitherto considered to be their particular business, we men finally will not be able to hinder them. We need neither funk nor sneer at them. Certainly it will be unwise to oppose them from the purely party politicians' standpoint, for they are fighting for things that concern them intimately. If women come to the conclusion that they will no longer obey the men they marry, good, I am not sure that any serious harm has been done. The son obeys his parents for love of them, not as a duty. The sacrificial faculty of woman will not thereby be impaired. Obedience—what is it worth where women are concerned? Such a word has no part with love or passion, or friendship or companionship.

That women want to loosen the divorce laws is, after all, natural enough. *Per contra*, we shall demand the abolition of the laws relating to breach of promise. If women grow too exorbitant, why men will refuse to marry. There is always a way. This is unquestionably the age for the cynic. Mothers were horrified when the two-step dance

first came in; now all dancing London is learning the still more exotic "one-step." These things are matters of fashion, as morality is a question of latitude. A Japanese gentleman is shocked beyond words in a London ball-room. When we see the sexes bathing openly together in Japan we are shocked too.

Trying very seriously to take the established masculine view of the matter, I yet find it hard to feel enthusiasm, or apprehension at the mutinous pronouncements of my friend Dora. She jibes at my Ruskin and annoys me intensely, it is true, but then who of us in this world has the exact, the final, knowledge? Had Ruskin when he pricked Ricardo? Has Dora when she pricks Ruskin? Despite all these centuries of enlightened milliners and coiffeurs I do not see that they have ever improved on the Greek woman's simple headgear, and when I tell Dora this she sometimes puts on braids too. And then I tell her that the light of man is woman, the life of woman man, whereat she gets very angry and threatens to put on "rats" and an enormous coal scuttle hat, and then I remind her of Ruskin's story of the Dusky Queen who pointed to her nine sons as the "brightest jewels" in her possession.

The Breakdown of Turkey

By Dr. E. J. Dillon

ACCORDING to a shrewd Arab dictum, a nation in decay counts many persons of intellect but no man of character, and history bears out the saying. Political or ethnical decomposition is often accompanied by phosphorescence, which superficial onlookers may easily mistake for guiding lights. To the realm of Mehmed V. this remark is peculiarly applicable; in the Turkey of the twentieth century there is neither hero-worship nor hero; indeed, there never was much room for men of mark in the land of the Osmanli since its monarch became a despot and its Caliph a vice-god. In this respect the condition of things there has long exemplified the Turkish proverb, that "Two acrobats cannot dance on the same rope." For generations the scimitar of the Grand Turk swept horizontally a little above the heads of his subjects, ruthlessly lopping off those which towered above the dead level of the crowd, and the effect of this levelling process is painfully manifest to-day. Turkey possesses some men of parts, a few persons of considerable talents, one veteran statesman, and several self-chosen candidates for fame; but there is no man of character there, no rough hewer of a nation's destinies, no born leader of men.

It is hardly too much to say that the entire Turkish race is degenerating visibly; its life-sap is drying up. Mohammed II. and Solyman the Magnificent have no worthy descendants in the twentieth century. The main causes of this decay lie tolerably near the surface. Leaving on one side fatalism and the sluggishness it engenders, I would account for the enfeeblement of the race, which was once marvellously robust and healthy, by misgovernment and military service. Misrule unfitted them for the struggle for life by making them dependent on Christian labour for their livelihood, and on the State for their privileged condition, while military service decimated the people. The Turks, in their two-fold capacity as the conquering race and as Moslems, have looked upon the

profession of arms as their own special vocation, and disqualified Christians from following it; and having lived by the sword, they are now perishing by the sword. Within the memory of the present generation Turkey has always been at war. There has been no respite: now the struggle was with a foreign Power, now with a section of her own subjects.

But since the establishment of the new *régime* these conflicts have grown more numerous and more sanguinary. The blood tax paid by the nation has at last become tremendous. The soil of the Yemen, Albania, Syria, Tripoli, is sodden with Turkish gore. And to the Moloch of war the flower of the people is still being sacrificed mercilessly. Young men, hale and strong, and brimful of spirits and vigour, are taken from their fields and their hearths, and hurried off to the battlefield to be slain by bullets or carried away by fell disease. I lately visited villages in various parts of the Empire and found that the bulk of the people whom I met in the cornfields and meadows, in the huts and mosques, were mainly old men, and boys and girls with wrinkled or pinched faces, victims of hunger, cold, disease. Orphaned children ran wild without supervision. In the towns, too, where dangers beset them at every hand's turn, the little ones, bereft of their breadwinners, are left largely to their own devices. They receive no education, no guidance, no moral or material help. Many of them have to steal or beg or else starve, and some pass through all these phases to the grave.

For these evils the unique remedy is peace: peace abroad and order at home.

The peasants, who are the salt of the Turkish earth, are neglected, like the children. There is no one to direct them. They are steeped in ignorance. They take superstition, and even cruelty, for religion, and confound fanaticism with zeal. Moslems are forbidden by the Koran to kill, nay, even to strike, an unarmed Christian. But at Adana they religiously slew thousands of Armenians, firmly believing that they were obeying the behests of Allah as well as the order of the Caliph. By nature the Turks are not fanatical. Ignorance and evil influences have made them so.

For these evils the remedy is education.

There is no industry in the Empire, and even agriculture, which is the staple occupation of the people, is at a low ebb. For lack of young men labour is dear and bad, and the methods of the husbandmen differ little from those which

were in vogue in Noah's days. But at present they are positively baleful, as well as inadequate, because they exhaust the soil. When the crops are abundant, as they often are, the farmer cannot transport them to those markets in which they would fetch a good price, for lack of railways, carriage roads, and waterways; he must therefore sell his harvest for a song. In this way a blessing becomes a curse. During my recent sojourn in Turkey I was struck with the great fall in the price of cattle. Peasants were selling at nominal prices the beasts of burden without which they are almost helpless, for there are no agricultural banks to tide them over the crisis.

To these dark clouds there is no silver lining. No change for the better can be hoped for soon. Quiescence, the quiescence of the Mohammedan fatalist, paralyses the arm of the middle-aged rustic; the young peasant is in the army or his grave, and the aged folks are too old to learn. Nothing is done, nothing is even attempted, by the Government, which lacks funds for agricultural experiments and wants all the money it can scrape together for its army and navy, its fortresses and its ships.

There is no education in the Empire. Young Turkey and its Secret Committee have turned a deaf ear to the clamour for schools. Foreign benefactors there are who, like the Americans and the French, maintain educational establishments in the towns, but these institutions are few, and not as good as they might be. In the rural districts there are no schools at all. The difficulties in the way of a network of educational institutions are formidable. The villages, many of which contain only fifteen or ten houses each, and could not pay for a staff of teachers, are often far apart. And the Government, spending its money in preparations for war, cannot spare a piastre for education. But were it otherwise—were the funds available—the problem would not yet be solved; one would then have to find the men. The country is devoid of schoolmasters and of a sufficient number of individuals fitted to teach.

Now of all the races which acknowledge the Sultan's sway, the Turks are most in need of education. Chivalrous to a high degree, they are not lovers of justice. Superlatively generous, they are neither industrious nor thrifty. And the combination of these good and bad qualities bids fair to ruin them. Their lack of a sense of justice has embroiled them with all the nationalities in the realm, while

their unbusiness-like ways have driven them to the clutches of foreign usurers. All trade and commerce in Constantinople, Smyrna, Trebizond, is carried on by Greeks, Armenians, Bulgars, Levantines, Europeans. In Pera one might search for a Turkish merchant at noon with a lamp and not find one. Under the Young Turks the outlook is just as hopeless as under the Old Turks.

How closely the Secret Committee and its nominees in the Government have followed in the footsteps of their Hamidian predecessors, may be inferred from an example which is typical. An Ottoman acquaintance of mine received a concession from the Government to float a company which, had it been formed, would, it is confidently stated, have brought wealth to the nation, given lucrative employment to thousands of the Sultan's subjects, offered an advantageous investment to Turkish capitalists, and furnished the State with most welcome help in war time. A large part of the necessary capital was raised in Turkey; the remainder was promised in England, although it could just as well have been subscribed in Constantinople and Smyrna. Everything was satisfactorily settled, and the prospectus was about to be written when a hitch occurred. The Government wanted a fat bribe and told the promoter so. My acquaintance, who is himself a politician, but an honest one, refused to be a party to the transaction. His bureaucratic friends tried to dissuade him from quixotism, and advised him to yield and "take it out" of the public. But he held firm. Thereupon the authorities put off the ratification of the statutes until the term had lapsed and then it cancelled the concession altogether.

When comparing the Young with the Old Turk one is tempted to characterise them in the words of their national saying: "Whether it is a black dog or a white dog, it is always a dog."

Turkey then is in a state of chaotic misery. Parallel with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire runs the demoralisation of its dominant race. Healthy striving is dead. The political principles which other communities deem fundamental and take for granted, find no recognition in the Sultan's dominions. Justice is not administered there; people hardly know what justice is. The judges are as much under the thumb of the Secret Committee as are the police, and the fountain-head of equity is poisoned.

All the innovations that the Revolution has hitherto

imported into the realm of Mehmed V. are: government by secret society, party success by means of standardised assassination, and the three-legged gallows for men of influence who disagree with the Committee in deed, or word, or thought.

That a race labouring under these fundamental defects and confronted with a problem so gigantic in its bearings as the governing of a number of conflicting peoples and creeds should seriously try to absorb the highly cultured Greeks, Armenians, Bulgars, and Arabs, is hardly conceivable. Yet that was the aim which the Turkish race, as represented or misrepresented by the Committee of Union and Progress, set itself to attain and has been senselessly pursuing for the past three years. And in order to achieve this mad purpose, every organ of the "constitution" has been brought into active play. A race of higher culture, especially if it have also superiority of numbers, may absorb a lower race or permeate it with its own spirit, and impose its language first upon the leading men and then upon large sections of the conquered masses. But no such feat can be achieved by a people whose cultural equipment is relatively slender, whose traditions include no stirring memories of conquest in the sphere of art, science or social progress, and which is largely outnumbered by the races which it seeks to assimilate. And that is the case of the Turk. On whatever scales you weigh the Turk he will be found lighter than the Greek, the Bulgarian, the Serb, the Roumanian, the Arab, and the Armenian, all of whom he is intent on denationalising and absorbing.

For this mischievous policy, the Committee of "Union and Progress" is answerable. Its members, who combined masonry with assassination, and linked Moslem orthodoxy with cosmopolitan freethinking, decreed that the various races of the Empire should without unnecessary delay be Turkified. "Ottomanism" was to be the common denominator for a time, but the Turkish race was ultimately to absorb all the others. To the attainment of this end the schools, the mosques, the tribunals, the army, the navy, were made subservient. And lest these means should be ineffectual, systematised assassination was superadded. The restless pioneers among the non-Moslem races of the Empire were shot down or poignarded one by one. Assassins moved stealthily from village to village like angels of death, felt, not seen. And the upshot of this insensate action has

been to put the political fabric in the trough of the sea. Every nationality in the Empire is now up in arms against the Government and the Committee. Not only Turkification, but even "Ottomanism" has become odious to them all. They have lost faith in the Turk, even in the loyal Turk, who means what he says and keeps his plighted word. And when Damad Ferid Pasha and Colonel Sadik Bey—men of honour and influence—founded the Opposition party last November, the Greeks under Boussios declined to join them, on the ground—among others—that Turkish promises had become devoid of meaning. Every ethnic element now is hostile to the conqueror. The downfall of the Empire—which, to many non-Turks, appears to be a lesser evil than the perpetuation of the *status quo*—is now calmly talked of as a likely contingency not only by professional politicians, but also by members of the reigning dynasty.

So long as the Committee keeps its power and place, Turkey and the Turks will continue to be hateful to the non-Moslem creeds and the non-Turkish races of the realm. And the Committee is resolved to cling at all costs to its commanding position. That, to my mind, is one of the direst and most imminent of the perils by which the Turkey of Mehmed V. is now beset. It would be a mischievous resolve even were the secret Junta to confine its self-defence to the use of legal weapons; but to be ready as is the Committee to have recourse to violence and bloodshed in order to keep its hold on power, is disastrous.

There is, however, a humorous side to the matter, and it is hard to suppress a smile when one reflects upon the nationality of the prime authors of this suicidal policy of denationalisation. The Salonica Committee consisted of seven members until 1911, when five others were added to their number. I am personally acquainted with a few of these, others I have merely seen, and some I have never even looked upon. But unless my memory deceives me, the Secretary General, Adil Bey, who before the Revolution was Director of the Customs of Salonica, is the son of a Circassian mother. Nessimy Bey, deputy for Constantinople, is a Cretan, which is another way of saying that he is a Moslem-Greek. Captain Eyoob Sabri Bey is an Albanian. Nadji Bey, sub-lieutenant, is a Persian by extraction. Osman Effendi, the ex-Kaimakam, is an Albanian. Talaat Bey, deputy for Andrianople and ex-Minister of the Interior, is said to be a gipsy whose

appearance does credit to the race. Nazim Bey is said to be a Jew. Halil Bey, who presided over the Congress of 1910, and read a curious and characteristic report there, advocating, it is alleged, the extermination of restless Greeks, is the only genuine Turk among those eight. There is something supremely comical in the picture of a secret conclave composed of foreigners, Albanian, Greek, Persian, Jewish, Circassian and gipsy members, compelling all the national elements of the Empire to become—Turks.

It was these same men, without a vein of humour, who raised the son of a Greek to the Grand Vizierate, and charged him to uphold this policy of Turkification, after having first compelled him to promise solemnly that he would not jeopardise the cause by engaging in questionable financial transactions while he occupied a position of trust.

What it particularly behoves us to bear in mind, when passing in review the Committee's policy, is that the Turkish race, which is so little fitted by nature to sway the destinies of the other peoples of the Empire, is represented and guided by a body of men whose motives and interests are of a personal or at best of a party character, and who cannot, therefore, achieve even such a limited meed of success as would be otherwise attainable. Equally noteworthy is the quiescence of the masses and their men of confidence. They seem to possess in a superlative degree the dubious qualities enumerated in the Epistle to the Corinthians, which enable them "to hope all things, to believe all things, and to endure all things." And this is perhaps the most pathetic trait in the entire national tragedy.

By the self-centred action of the Committee Turkey has been isolated abroad among the Powers of Europe, and isolated at home among the nationalities of the Empire. The Turkish name, which had been discredited by Abdul Hamid, has been blackened beyond redemption by the anonymous successors of the Red Sultan. Some of its many sins are inexpiable. Among them are: systematic injustice; religious intolerance alternating with crude Voltairianism; nationalism merging into rank Chauvinism, and running parallel to criminal neglect of imperial interests; puerile frivolity, which plunged the country into war, followed by a resistance as heroic as it was vain and ruinous; "order" upheld by disorder; opposition checked by assassination, and government carried on by lawlessness and bloodshed.

Committee-ism has been weighed in the balances against Hamidism, and declared by many to be less endurable; but in England people hardly guess what a thick substratum of heinous outrage and cruelty underlies the accusation. A few examples of recent date may perhaps whet the reader's curiosity to inquire further into the misdeeds of the Committee, of which the consequences may possibly render foreign intervention imperative. I quote from an unpublished official report, which is now in the archives of certain Continental Chancelleries; it describes, in the dry language of an annalist, the way in which arms were sought for by the Turkish troops; the month is last July:—

"In the district of Ueskub the authorities, in their search for arms, had recourse to the usual method of beating the inhabitants, and they employed it with a degree of violence equal to that which was put in force against the Albanians, the Serbs, and the Greeks. The cruelty of these executions was so revolting that a number of villagers banded themselves together and went round to the Consulates in the town of Ueskub to lodge a protest. These men were themselves victims and bore the stigmata of their punishment on their bodies: some of them had very nasty wounds, produced by flogging, and also the marks of having been tied to trees."

"In many cases the villagers accused of hiding arms were beaten until they gave up the ghost. A number of the *personnel* of the Italian Consulate in Koumanovo witnessed the funeral of a Bulgarian who had thus ingloriously and painfully lost his life. On the 8th August the town of Ueskub witnessed an impressive scene: A crowd of prisoners was brought in from various villages—tottering, limping, moaning. There were two priests, five monks and forty-two laymen in this artificial Purgatory. They could hardly walk for their wounds. One of the priests had manacles. He suddenly turned to the sightseers, men of his own Bulgarian race, and exclaimed: 'Brethren, these our sufferings are the fruits of the Constitution. And they are not the bitterest. We have left behind in our village the corpses of six men who have been beaten to death. Beaten to death under the Ottoman Constitution!'"

In the town of Istip a more moving scene was enacted. Istip is the centre of the Bulgarian agitation—for in Macedonia there is a strong feeling against torture and assassination, and some people there are bold enough to

rise up in arms against it. The Macedonians may be described as a ferocious lot, for when attacked they defend themselves. The chiefs of these armed bands, knowing that the Turks were coming to look for arms, issued a proclamation forbidding the inhabitants to deliver them up, and severe penalties were threatened against all who should disobey. The Turks got word of this, and sent three battalions of infantry and a large force of artillery to the place. The soldiers surrounded the town and mountain guns were placed on commanding heights around. Then the notabilities of the place, including the clergy, were summoned and ordered to give up all arms. On their making answer that there were none, they were seized and beaten. Some were tortured. The Vicar-General of the Metropolitan Archbishop was belaboured until he could not move. He was then carried to his house and put to bed.

Next day they were all ordered to appear anew. From their houses, their prison cells, and their sick-beds, they were taken to the hall of the school. The vicar was dragged from his bed with only his shirt on, and carried in that condition to the meeting place. On the way they tore the bandages from his wounds and struck him with the butt ends of their rifles in the name of the Committee of Union and Progress! Union and progress forsooth! The Mussulman population, which curiosity and fanaticism had drawn together, followed the Vicar-General hissing, shouting, shying tomatoes and stones at him. In the hall they forced him to his knees and commanded him to chant a prayer for the Sultan. He had to conform; but his voice was low. "Louder, priest, louder!" they yelled. And when the prayer was over: "Now produce the arms!" they shouted.

There was a moment's silence. The Vicar-General, racked with maddening pain and fearing still worse things ahead took a desperate resolve, but said: "Be it so. Permit me then to enter my house in order to get the list of the people who have weapons hidden."

The authorisation given, he repaired not to his home but to the Communal Office, where he scribbled a letter to the Metropolitan Archbishop and a last farewell to his children. Then he seized a revolver and blew his brains out. That tragedy was played last August under the Committee of Union and Progress. The Moslem authorities, pursuing the man with their hatred beyond his life, insisted on burying him without religious rites. "The number of persons

injured by beating in this place is over 160, and of these about sixty are grievously injured." So says the official report.

Here is a sketch of a dramatic episode which began last September and continued into October, and which, had it occurred during the last five years of Abdul Hamid's reign, might have provoked foreign intervention. The scene of the misdeeds which I am about to touch upon is the City of Yenidje-Vardar. To the inhabitants of that ill-starred town the 27th September brought a peremptory order to give up all the weapons they possessed. Two days later, about 6 a.m., Turkish soldiers stood guard over every Christian house there, and the inmates were informed that they must consider themselves confined with strict orders to hold no communication with any of their neighbours. Then the search began. Many people were carried away and thrown into prison. That however was a seemingly humane and intelligible precedure by comparison with other methods. Seemingly.

During four consecutive days none of the inmates of the houses were allowed to quit the precincts of their dwellings. None. Their cattle remained without food or drink for all that time. Their children had to make the best of what chanced to be in the house. But nobody was permitted to go out even for food or water! Many people and many animals suffered intensely from hunger and thirst—not so intensely, however, as the dogs of Constantinople which, by order of the Committee, were taken to an island and there left to perish of hunger.

Almost 280 persons were imprisoned. As nothing was found against them they were beaten and tortured by way of compelling them to confess. Most of them were laid on their backs, and their feet so held by soldiers that the executioner could administer the punishment on the soles of their feet—from ten to twenty strokes at a time. After each tale of blows there would be a pause; then a series of questions. As the prisoners were stubborn and would not incriminate themselves the experiment would be repeated—over and over again. The soles of many of these "united and progressive" subjects of the Constitutional Sultan were reduced to a pulp, the document tells us. Of course it was done for the behoof of the Turkish race and in the name of the Committee of—Union and Progress. Union and Progress! But not all

were beaten on the soles of their feet. Some received the blows on their hands, their abdomens, and even their heads. *Doux pays.*

The people who were thrown into prison were not better off than those who were tortured at home. For four days they were kept without food or drink. What that meant in hot September may be imagined. When one learns that many of them were forced to stand many hours on one foot, one's mind runs back to the days of King Yezdigerd of Persia, and the fantastic punishments he inflicted upon Armenian princes some fifteen hundred years ago.

The Macedonian priest had his arms and legs beaten until the bones were fractured. Summoned to appear in this condition, he was carried on a mattress by four soldiers. "Then his brains were blown out by a Turkish soldier," say the Macedonians; "he committed suicide," cry the Moslems, "by placing the muzzle of a rifle in his mouth and moving the trigger." It is immaterial which version is correct. The wretched man had no further business with terrestrial life, and it was a mercy that he quitted it so promptly. That the Macedonian and other Christians, who see their pastors dealt with thus by the Committee of Union and Progress in the name of the Turkish people, should be unwilling to let themselves be absorbed by that people, is hardly to be wondered at. It is human nature. That they should rebel with arms in their hands is quite natural. And it will be well to bear these things in mind next spring.

Yenidje-Vardar remained beleaguered by the Turkish soldiers for twenty-one days, the prohibition to quit it being maintained strictly. On Sunday, the 8th October, towards evening, the Macedonian population was gathered together in sections, from 100 to 200 persons in each city ward, with soldiers standing round them on guard. And from that Sunday evening until the following Tuesday at 4 p.m. these unfortunate human beings were compelled to remain standing there without eating or drinking, forbidden to lie down or sit, without any covering against the cold of the night, and with strict orders not to speak. When they were at last allowed to go, many of them were half dead. Black, swollen legs constituted a common phenomenon among them. Uncommon methods of torture were also resorted to. The following statements are made on the strength of documents which are not official:—

"Athanasius of Radomir was bound to a tree, his face turned towards the sun and his hands tied behind the tree trunk. For three days he was left thus without eating or drinking." For three days and three nights! A man from Litovoy had his arms stretched out in the form of a cross and was kept in that position for two whole days. It is a thousand pities there was no Ribera to paint him and his strained and swollen muscles. A Turk who had connived at the Macedonian bands, was forced to expiate his crime by standing on one foot for twenty-four hours, the other foot being held up by a strap attached to his shoulder while his body was tied to a tree! A man named Demetrius Mitrense had burning eggs placed in his arm-pits, and his arms were then pressed down closely to his body. Would another dose of Constitutionalism purge the nation of these odious traits?

No useful purpose could be achieved by drawing further upon the records of these latter-day atrocities. Enough has been said to prepare the mind of the British public for their political consequences which, unless I am mistaken, are not far distant. The fiendish cruelty evinced by the Committee towards the nationalities, Christian and Moslem; its cynical contempt for law and justice and human life; the practice of systematized assassination as part of the machinery of government, have contributed to lay the train which will soon explode in a new revolution or a ruinous civil war. True, there is now a new party in existence, presided over by the Sultan's brother-in-law, Damad Ferid Pasha, whose praiseworthy ambition it is to gather up the strength of the Constitutional and other patriotic parties in the country, and to transform them from a number of scattered fragments into an effective machine for good government. For the chiefs of this body of regenerators whom it is my privilege to know personally, I feel unqualified admiration. But I cannot blink the Achilles' heel of their new association; the meekness of their leaders and the evolutionary character of their tactics. They seem to forget that they are living in a period of revolution when laws are struck silent. To bind themselves as they have done by Constitutional limitations is to render not only successful attack, but even efficacious defence, impossible in certain probable contingencies. They resemble a man carrying a cane who should undertake to fight an adversary armed with a sabre. None of the leaders

has as yet shown himself capable of riding the whirlwind and guiding the storm.

The resistance offered to Italy in Tripoli is magnificent. But the motives underlying it, so far as one can ascertain them, are reprehensible, and the political consequences of the struggle may yet prove disastrous. The Committee, whose downright folly is answerable for the loss of Tripoli, is desirous of warding off the consequences of its neglect by protracting a duel of which the issue is a foregone conclusion. The same motive apparently inspires the Committee's attitude towards the growing opposition which it has roused at home. The organised opposition under Damad Ferid Pasha is making such headway, in Parliament and in the country, that Said Pasha's Cabinet can no longer remain in office consistently with its duty to the nation. But instead of resigning in favour of the Opposition, the Government will probably dissolve the Chamber and rule without the Legislature. The Bill enabling the Sultan to do this without obtaining the assent of the Senate, has just been defeated in the Chamber. Possibly the Cabinet may disregard the Constitution and take its own course. That is one of the contingencies for which, so far as I know, the Opposition is not adequately prepared. For the decisive struggle will perhaps be fought out not on Constitutional lines, but with rifles and guns or else with dynamite and gun cotton. And that is one of the dangers with which Turkey is now faced.

Troubles in Albania and Macedonia would also appear to be imminent, especially if the war with Italy goes on. I am in close touch with some of the Albanian chiefs, and I can affirm that a rising is being planned on a scale which would be inconceivable if the Committee and its nominees in the Cabinet had redeemed the promises they made to the insurgent leaders a short time ago. The burnt villages are still heaps of ruins, the funds have not yet been distributed to the needy, and thousands of Albanians are suffering from hunger and cold. The grievances of the Macedonians need no rhetorical sauce to render them piquant. In the light of the specimens given above the reader may gauge their impelling force with tolerable accuracy.

Such are a few of the solvent forces now undermining the Turkish Empire. How they will be helped or hindered and what the concrete resultant will be, time alone can reveal. One thing, however, already seems as clear as it is

symptomatic. The guarantee of Turkey's integrity which Austria-Hungary was willing to accord in 1908, and which Italy may be asked for in 1912, is become a manifest impossibility. By her own deeds, which are those of the Committee, Turkey is proclaimed an Asiatic Power.

Bergson and the Mystics

By Evelyn Underhill

DURING the past twelve months the philosophy of Henri Bergson has been discussed from many points of view; the value of its contribution to our understanding of biology, ethics, art, and social life has been carefully investigated. Yet, strangely enough, one group of phenomena, one type of activity on which it throws remarkable and unexpected light, has so far been left out of consideration. I mean that group of phenomena, that kind of life which by friends and enemies alike is generally called "mystical."

From the point of view of that normal consciousness which is characteristic of the average man, this group of phenomena seems perhaps not very important. For it, the mystic is either a remote, half-sacred figure, or the proper object of amused contempt; and this for the most natural of reasons. The reality of his life, since it baffles alike the analytic brain and busy tongue, he finds himself unable to communicate to us. Full though it be of high romance and radiant with a strange enticing beauty, it is yet known only in the living of it, like the passion of love. The mystic's "path is in the pathless; his trace is in the traceless"; and human intelligence ever tends to discredit all those experiences which its clumsy device of speech refuses to express, regardless of the fact that all life's finest moments are thereby excluded from participation in reality.

Now Bergson, as it seems to some of us, comes as a mediator between these inarticulate explorers of the Infinite and the map-loving human mind; since he offers to us, not the sharp conventional diagram of some older philosophies, but a fluid and living "scheme of things"—a teeming world of life, a complex realm of consciousness—and a way of looking at that world and that consciousness which, if we choose to employ it, opens to us new aspects of reality, new possibilities of attainment. Within the enriched and extended field of vision of which he makes us free, the shallow-soiled but highly-cultivated country of common sense looks astonishingly small. Above, about and beneath it is the wild unknown—

world within world enshrined, of hidden rock and spring, thick jungle, star-swept spaces—full of incalculable possibilities, ablaze with hidden splendours. All those countless worlds were once within our reach, potential homes for us, had life chosen to cut her way to freedom by another path than this ; had consciousness been focussed on some other aspect of many-edged reality. In such a universe the experience of the mystic, which is as much a fact as the experience of artist philosopher or practical man, cannot easily be discredited. He may be as rare as any other type of genius : but history forces us to admit that he represents a permanently recurrent variation of human consciousness ; a variation which sees, and reacts to, the world, in another way than that which is roughly characteristic of the majority of men.

The mystics' way of seeing the world, if we trust their reports, is a larger way than that of humanity in general. As civilised man congratulates himself on the possession of a wider universe than that of the aboriginal savage, for whom the "flaming ramparts" are set up close beyond the fences of his tribal home ; so the mystic knows himself free of a greater country, heir to a universe of deeper and richer significance than that which is accessible to the consciousness of the practical man. He tells us this in many different tongues, describes it under symbols of various difficulty ; but always with an accent of steady certitude and of exultant passion which is difficult to resist. He may say with Dionysius the Areopagite, that his exalted vision penetrates to "the Divine Dark which is an inaccessible light" ; with Ruysbroeck that he has launched his spirit's ship upon "the vast and stormy sea of the divine" ; with Richard Jefferies, that he has been "absorbed into the being or existence of the universe" ; with Jacob Boehme, that "he has looked into the deepest foundations of things" ; with Malaval, that "by one of love's secrets" he "penetrates the outer husk of creation to the divinity which is within" ; or with Angela of Foligno, that he has "beheld a beauty so great that I can say nothing concerning it, save that I saw the Supreme Beauty which contains in itself all goodness."

Whether they use the language of religion, philosophy or art, these adventurers—and countless others who have shared their quest—would probably agree that this communion with Reality, this austere yet intimate experience which only paradox can express, was obtained by a change

of attitude, a change of relation between the world and the self. The substance, and to some extent the method of their mystic vision was always that which St. Augustine has described to us in a celebrated passage of the "Confessions"—

"The mind withdrew its thoughts from experience, extracting itself from the contradictory throng of sensuous images, that it might find out what that Light was wherein it was bathed . . . . and thus, with the flash of one hurried glance, it attained to the Vision of *That Which Is.*"

"If the mind turns from its ordinary preoccupation with material things," says, in effect, the greatest intellect of the 4th century, "it may, if only for an instant, catch a glimpse of undistorted reality." A long line of contemplatives have proved for themselves the truth of these words: more, that the "hurried glance" may learn to sustain itself, become the forerunner of a deeper, more permanent state of comprehension. Now, with the twentieth century, Bergson brings their principles and their practice into immediate relation with philosophy: telling us, in almost Augustinian language, how great and valid may be the results of that new direction of mental movement, that alteration and intensification of consciousness, which is the secret of artistic perception, of contemplation and of ecstasy.

"Our psychic life," he says, "may be lived at different heights, now nearer to action, now further removed from it; according to our *attention to life* . . . . that which is usually held to be a greater complexity of the psychical life appears to us, from our point of view, to be a greater dilatation of the whole personality; which, normally screwed down by action, expands with the unscrewing of the vice in which it has allowed itself to be squeezed, and, always whole and undivided, spreads itself over a wider and wider surface."

In this dilatation of consciousness—released from its usual servitude to the "throng of sensuous images"—Bergson finds our only chance of "knowing reality"; the living, moving actuality of the Light wherein we are bathed. It is an act, he says, in which "will and vision become *one*," and here every mystic, knowing how intense must be the act of withdrawal by which he attains the contemplative state, would agree with him.

Only in such mystics is the faculty of intuition, that strange, hardly describable power of knowing by contact or self-mergence, heightened, steadied and controlled; till the hurried glance of Augustine becomes "the deep gaze of

love from which nothing escapes," giving to its possessor a permanent consciousness of reality, raising the levels of his inner life. The great artist, whom Bergson holds the true knower of the Real, shares to some extent this mystic consciousness. He has "won the confidence of reality by long comradeship with its external manifestations," and, through and by those "sensuous images," has attained as it were a sacramental communion with Truth. The "thick veil" which hangs between our true selves and our consciousness is for him almost transparent. For the mystic it has been rent asunder, and he can enter his holy of holies whenever he will. Hence he is able, in a deeper sense than is possible to the artist, to unite himself with the very being of Reality; and so lives with a more intense existence than ordinary men are able to attain.

What then is the nature of the change which this immense development of intuition effects in the consciousness of the mystic? How can we actualise to ourselves the difference between his experience and that of ordinary men? Here again Bergson, in his general discussion of human consciousness, comes to help us with suggestions which place the situation in new light; and bring the strange adventures of the mystic into line with the rules which appear to govern the normal manifestations of man's psychic life.

"An intuition," he says first, "is nothing but a direction of movement: and although capable of infinite development, is simplicity itself." The mystic art, then, consists first in a direction of movement. That ceaseless change, that stream of consciousness which *is* our mental life, is turned a new way, orientated afresh. Thus its whole relations with the universe are changed: "the glory of the lighted mind" plays upon new, neglected levels of reality. Next, this alteration creates a "new" state of things, does not merely add something to the old. The perception which it brings is not put into a water-tight compartment, but invades and tinctures the whole of life; altering the quality or *intensity* of the self. The degree of that self's intensity is the governing factor in determining the world that it knows; as the personality is heightened, deeper and deeper layers of existence are revealed. This has always been the experience of the mystic. "All things were new," says George Fox of his hour of illumination, "and all the creation gave another smell unto me than

before, beyond what words can utter." The same tree, says Blake, may move one to tears of joy, and be to another only a green thing that stands in the way. The difference between the two is the difference between mystic and non-mystic vision : and this is simply a difference of *intensity*.

The mystics, says Plotinus, anticipating the psychological conclusions of the newest philosophy, belong to "that race of divine men who through a more excellent power and with piercing eyes, acutely perceive the supernal light ; to the vision of which they raise themselves up, above the clouds and darkness of the lower world, and there abidingly despise everything in these regions of sense. Having just such joy of that place, which is truly and properly their own, as he who after many wanderings is at length restored to his own country."

In his theory of rhythm, and his theory of the nature of mind, Bergson seems to offer us a hint as to the way in which this " more excellent power," this restoration to the country of the soul *non tantum cernendam sed et inhabitandam*, may be attained—*is* attained, in the case of those who possess mystical genius of a high type.

The soul, the total psychic life of man, he says, is something much greater than the little patch of consciousness which most of us idly identify with "ourselves." It is like a sword ; the "sword of the spirit." Only the point of that sword penetrates matter, sets up relations with it, and cuts the path through which the whole of life shall move. But behind this point of conscious mental activity is the whole weight and thrust of the unseen blade : that blade which is weapon and warrior in one. Long ages of evolution have tempered the point to the work demanded of it by daily life. In its ceaseless onward push it cuts in one direction only ; through that concrete " world of things " in which man finds himself, and with which he is forced to deal. The brain, through which it acts, with which as it were its living point is shod, closes it in, limits and defines its operations : is on one hand a tool, on the other a screen. Had our development taken another path than that which we know and so easily accept as "natural," the matter of the brain, amenable as it is to the creative touch of life, might have become the medium by which we orientated ourselves to another world, perceived and expressed another order of reality.

Now in mystics we seem to have a fortunate variation of

the race, in which just this thing has come about. They do not wear the mental blinkers which keep the attention of the average man focussed on one narrow path. Under the spur of their vivid faculty of intuition they "gather up all their being and thrust it forward"—the whole personality, not its sharp intellectual tip alone—on a new free path. Hence they live and move in worlds to us unrealised; see other aspects of the many levelled, many coloured world of reality. They hear supernal harmonies to which we are deaf, are swept by unspeakable emotions, endure invasions from the transcendent sphere, against which we have raised the prudent earth-works of common sense. Born capable of a new attitude or, as we say, "with a mystical temperament," they have followed the trend of that attitude, and forced their mental machinery to accommodate itself to the new situation; followed "the Mystic Way," with all its hardships and rewards. Life, for them, is turned in a new direction. Urged by that intuition which is "nothing but a direction of movement," consciousness has changed; the brain has been forced to learn new movements, other than those which minister to the practical needs of physical life. The function of the brain, as Bergson has told us, is just this production of movement. It is the bridge between the soul and the outer world. It receives sensations; executes movements in response. It is a plastic machine; and those reactions which it performs most frequently soon make their mark, setting up habits of thought and perception which tend to easy, almost automatic accomplishment.

But the mystic has little use for those easy mental habits. With him, as with the artist, a hard-won innocence of eye must replace our common careless way of seeing things. "Our knowledge of things," says Bergson, "derives its form from our bodily functions and lower needs. . . . By unmaking that which these needs have made, we may restore to Intuition its original purity, and so recover contact with the Real." In the lives of the great mystics, we see just this business in progress. They are lives of great interior struggle; of psychic uproar; in which the deliberate unmaking of the old, holds as large a place as the emergence and training of the new.

We know how the time of adolescence in the normal human animal is a time of strain, of transmutation, rather than of steady growth. The universe of the child is then

unmade, the universe of the man built up in its place. More, character itself goes into the melting pot, to submit to profound modifications as the passions of maturity emerge. The sword of the spirit turns in its sheath ; personality is "new born." Now, the mystic is the adolescent of the infinite ; and we find, when we come to study his life, just that process of path-cutting and transmutation in progress, which means that the enduring stream of ceaseless change which is his true existence—is, in its deepest sense, *himself*—has taken a new and difficult direction, instead of following the old easy channels appropriate to those who understood as a child and knew in part. The crisis which begins his new career—initiates his consciousness of reality—is often called by him "new birth," so fresh and strange it seems. The first hurried glance at *That Which Is* was but the path-finder on a way along which the totality of his life is bound to move. At first, that new movement must be at the expense of great effort. Strange, difficult acts are required ; old habits are useless—worse, are in the way.

This interior struggle of re-adjustment, the necessity of which is thus demonstrated by the Bergsonian psychology, is well known to the mystics. They call it the "Way of Purgation ;" one of the three great arbitrary divisions in which they split up the continuous sweep of their life, its indivisible movement towards Freedom and Reality. They give us many vivid pictures of its stress and turmoil, in which we can almost see spirit—at once free in essence and fettered in fact—at her life-long work of twisting matter, in this case the matter of that physical body by which she deals with the physical world, to her own high purposes. Often the physical body of the mystic suffers pain and illness under the stress and violence with which spirit attacks its task ; a task for which edifying reasons are often adduced, but which is really conditioned by the psychological necessity of "restoring intuition to its original purity," so that, in the words of an old English contemplative, "vanity spised and spurned, to truth unpartingly we draw."

The stream of life, then—free, eager, and creative—is forced by the mystic into a special channel : his *élan vital* is set towards a special end. The brain, that "instrument of oblivion," is compelled in the interests of his peculiar vocation to forget much that it usually remembers ; to remember much that it usually forgets. Another Bergsonian simile

here comes to throw light upon the situation. The intellect, he has said, is like a cinematograph. It is selective rather than receptive; moving at a certain pace, a certain rhythm, it takes a series of snapshots of the continuous flux of reality through and with which it moves. The question of what snapshots it takes, what bits of reality it picks out and perceives, will depend upon the relation between its rhythm and the rhythmic flow of other aspects of the flux. The wider the rhythm and higher the tension of the perceiving consciousness—the longer its time-span or its "Now"—the larger will be the aspects of reality received. It is only thanks to the comparatively long rhythm, the high tension of human consciousness, that we receive under the synthetic forms of light and sound the incredibly rapid rhythms of the physical world. An alteration in the pace of our mental cinematograph would give us, as the result of those same physical movements, not light or sound, but some other thing unknown and unconceived.

All extensions, then, of the rhythm, all increase of the intensity, at which our psychic life proceeds, tend to give us reality in larger slices: make us capable of a higher synthetic act. The great man, or great mind, which can dominate life, is one who gathers up into the unity of an extended rhythm—perceives all at once—a vast number of smaller events and things which seem separate to other men. So the great seer or prophet transcends the common time-span, and perceives events in a wide and comprehensive vision. "Would not the whole of history," says Bergson, "be contained in a very short time for a consciousness at a higher degree of tension than our own; which should watch the development of humanity while contracting it, so to speak, into the great phases of its evolution?" Such a sentence as this casts sudden light on St. Thomas' definition of the Beatific Vision as a "participation of Eternity," or Ruysbroeck's deep saying of God, that "He contemplates Himself and all things in an Eternal Now, wherein the past and future have no place." It helps us, too, to understand that "experience of eternity," that "timelessness" which the mystic always reports as a characteristic of his ecstatic contemplation of Deity. In such ecstasies, his tension is so high, his "Now" is so different from the "Now" of ordinary human consciousness,—it embraces in its sweep so much greater a field—that he can only describe it as "partaking of the character of Eternity."

" O abbondante grazia, ond' io presunsi
ficcar lo viso per la luce eterna
tanto che la veduta vi consunsi!
Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
legato con amore in un volume,
ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;
Sustanzia ed accidenti, e lor costume,
quasi conflati insieme per tal modo,
che ciò ch'io dico è un semplice lume."

It may well come about that the commentator of the future will interpret this great passage—more, the whole canto from which it is taken—in terms not far removed from the positions of the Bergsonian philosophy.

There is another aspect of the mystic experience which is lit for us by this concept of life as movement, and rhythm and pace as controlling factors of our apprehension of reality. The idea of *rest*, Bergson has told us, is an illusion : the static world, the static *thing*, exists only for the human intelligence, which always " kills the thing it loves " in order to examine it at its ease. We pin the butterfly of life upon paper, arrange it with careful art, and then congratulate ourselves upon its natural appearance. But the reality, the " essential being " of the butterfly, its movement which was its life, evaporated at the touch of paper and pin. Life,—physical, mental or spiritual life—slips through our clever fingers when we try to catch it : and all that remains on our hands, all that we pin to the paper, is the empty husk we call Science, Metaphysics, or Theology. The reality of which these things are the outward sign, is " in a state of flux," to adopt the classic phrase of Heracleitus. The indivisible continuity, the " duration through change " of the self, is but a microcosm of the ever-moving, never-resting Universe. The illusion of " rest " is produced when we, and the object on which our attention is fixed, are moving at the same pace, as when two railway trains run side by side : for consciousness of movement is only possible to us through consciousness of changed relation. So in the mental world ; the rhythm or motion of the things we apprehend is only realised by us in its contrast to the rhythm or pace of apprehending mind. All movements slower than our own are imperceptible by us : such is the gentle, ceaseless change which constitutes the growth of animal and plant.

When we apply this line of thought to our study of the mystics, we find that a new and bright light is cast upon certain of their more paradoxical utterances. We know that

in describing his contemplative experience, the mystic perpetually resorts to the ideas of stillness, quiescence, immobility, to express—not only his own state—but also that of the Divine Truth which he declares himself to perceive. He says with Plotinus, that "being in an ecstasy or energising enthusiastically, he became established in a quiet or solitary union; not at all deviating from his own essence, nor revolving about himself, but being entirely stable, and becoming as it were stability itself." The active minds of busy modern men have not been slow to criticise such declarations. In particular, adherents of the new philosophy have made haste to discredit that "Unchanging Unity" "stability itself," which the mystics persistently describe. Yet a little reflection on their own first principles might well give pause to these hurried iconoclasts. If the mystic does, as he declares, change the quality of consciousness by his art of contemplation—and change it in a sense which makes him free of the wider world which is "transcendent" to ordinary men—this must mean that he effects a change of rhythm, an alteration of spiritual pace, which makes his consciousness approximate more closely to the "pace" of the supernal sphere. Each such approximation brings him nearer to the "illusion of stillness." Should his rhythm actually become that of the Reality he perceives, should he attain to that mystic surrender in which the fidgeting to and fro of his individual mind is merged in the great movement of the Whole, it will seem to him that his own spirit and the Reality which sustains it, are both "at rest." He will then say with Ruysbroeck that he "dwells altogether in restful fruition"—"that simple and unchanging condition" says Tauler, "wherein if a man truly enters, he feels that he has been throughout eternity." So Jelalu d'Din—

> "Eternal life, for me, is the time of union;
> Because time, for me, hath no place there."

"I am immersed in the Godhead like a fish in the sea," says Mechthild of Hackborn in a sudden illuminating image: moving with the great flux of things, yet peacefully supported on its tide.

More, this consciousness of tranquillity is reflected back by the mystic to the Divine Reality in which he feels himself to be immersed. Since he is, as he says, "in union" with it—moves with its movements, and works its will—it seems to him, as the twisting world seems to our

normal senses, to be indeed at rest. Hence comes a persistently static element in the highest of man's apprehensions of God. "*Semper agens, semper quietus!*" cried Augustine. "He is Very Rest," said Julian of Norwich. "I beheld a Thing as fixed and stable as it was indescribable," says Angela of Foligno, "and more than this I cannot say, save what I have often said already; namely that all was good." This paradox of the spiritual consciousness has forced the theologians to many an ingenious diagram, many an airy argument. Had they taken their departure from psychology instead of metaphysics, it might more easily have been explained. Almost alone amongst mystical writers, the extraordinary genius of Ruysbroeck seems to have grasped something of the meaning of this dual vision of Reality: as life, change, Becoming; and as Being, fruition, rest. "Tranquillity according to His essence, activity according to His nature: perfect stillness, perfect fecundity"—this, he says is the two-fold character of Deity; rather, the two-fold character of our knowledge of Deity. The first is the experience of the great mystic in his hours of ecstatic contemplation, when his little rhythm is merged in the great rhythm of the transcendent world: when the soul, in Boehme's words, "joins hands and dances with Sophia the Divine Wisdom." The second is the more normal experience of a consciousness, mystically perceptive it is true, but in whom the friction of individual life, the fret of personal activity, preserves the sense of movement, work and change. "He is active in all loving work, for he sees his rest. He is a pilgrim, for he sees his country. For love's sake he strives towards victory, for he sees his crown." This striving, this implicitly active aspect of the mystic life, is persistently denied by the enemies of mysticism. Yet here it is that we see the *élan vital* at work, ceaselessly moving towards the high levels of reality.

What that reality is, that completed life of freedom, which is spirit's aim and ideal, we shall never know, says Bergson, by the busy exercise of thought; but only in that "Free Act" in which we gather up all our being and thrust it forward towards worlds unknown. If this be so, then surely the mystic, most intrepid of voyagers upon the strangest of seas, must take a high place amongst the readers of the Riddle of the World. We have seen that his "contemplation" is little else than a disciplined and developed intuition: Augustine's "flashing hurried glance"

held steady by the educated will. The direction of his movement, the intention of his ceaseless change is towards that freedom, that capacity for creation which Bergson holds out to us as the objective of the spirit of life. He is an initiate of that Whole wherefrom we subtract those partial aspects of reality which we label Beauty or Truth. He knows it by being; by the conformity of his rhythm with the great rhythm of the All. "Pilgrimage to the place of the wise," says Jelalu'd'Din, "is to find escape from the flame of separation"—to merge the discrete world of appearance in the continuous flux of that one Reality which discloses itself to us as Spirit, Matter, Life. Here the ideals of the new philosopher and the far-off mystic coincide; each reinforcing and affirming—one by the gift of experience, the other by that of interpretation—humanity's growing vision of That Which Is.

The Flea and the Barnacle

By Cora Duff

"CHEER-O, GAMBOGE," said the Flea, accosting a fat Barnacle comfortably ensconced in the skin of a sleeping whale—the "Right whale," too, a monster well over sixty feet. "Say," he chirped, seeing that the Barnacle made no answer, "can't you talk?"

The Barnacle glanced at the merry fidget at his side. After all, this cheery imp of a land-lubber rather amused him. He saw no harm in a little parley.

"Parasite," he observed, for he knew how to tackle men.

"Parasite," snapped back the Flea. "Aren't you a parasite, then?"

"No, I'm a commensalist," answered the Barnacle, dreamily.

"A co—— who?" retorted the Flea. "What's that?"

"That," the Barnacle replied, "is what those strange people who write books, and whom we see sometimes as flotsam in the seas, call me—scientifically. A commensalist is a messmate; do you understand?"

"Quite so," sneered the Flea; "the country squire. Now, I'm a humanitarian."

The Barnacle knew that puns were out of fashion.

"Want to socialise everything, don't you? Expropriator! Bloodsucker! I know."

Then as the Flea made no reply, he added: "Artist!"

The Flea took seven of the count silently.

"Bonar Law!" he returned at length.

"Socialist!"

"Die-Hard!"

"Lloyd-George!"

The Flea began to feel he was not the equal to the Barnacle in the political game of calling names. Besides politics was not quite his line.

"Suppose I am," he began. "Fighting is the quintessence of life. All men live by the chase—art, ideals, women, honour, ambition. A tooth for a tooth; we are all

aliments one of the other. It is the law of life. I tell you the primitive instinct of life, which is that of the artist, from protozoa to Shakespeare——"

"Shakespeare!" interrupted the Barnacle. "I never heard of that species."

"Indeed," snarled the Flea. "Shakespeare is the expression of all beauty and knowledge, if you want to know. He's genius, the highest thing that ever was. He's a genus by himself, do you see? He's every man's possession, like the air and the sun. He just lived and wrote, and nobody quite seems to know who he was or how he did it; and because men can't understand they bring him to earth and fix him up with Bacon."

"Bacon," shouted the Barnacle, "and eggs?"

"The British breakfast. Quite so. Now . . ."

"Who told you this about Shakespeare?" put in the Barnacle.

"Told me," shrieked Pulga. "Haven't I been to the theatre? Ever heard of Hamlet?"

"I don't approve of the Play, young man," the Barnacle replied. "What about Hamlet?"

"Hamlet," pontificated the Flea, "is the genius of madness. All men are mad, you know; that is why they all work and kill, or live at all: it's only method."

"I see," said the Barnacle. "Is that why men write so many books?"

The Flea felt rather glad at the disturbance created by the Great Auk just at that moment, as it gave him time for reflection. He glanced at the seals peeping up through their breathing-holes in the ice, looking with their long whiskers like German professors at a kneipe.

"Not even madness," he said. "Few books have to be written. Most books are written because other men publish them."

"A trade?" threw in the Barnacle.

The Flea nodded.

"Thought so," continued the Barnacle; "England's going to the dogs they tell me. They want Protection."

"Or Liberty," ejaculated the Flea.

"Fiddle-sticks! They ought to burn those books."

"They are talking about it," said the Flea.

"Liberty," pursued the Barnacle, "is the illusion of the age, and it is all due to education. The modern world is full of tinkers, terrapins and table-turners."

"Then you don't recognise beauty in life at all?" the Flea struck in.

"Up to a point. Oh, yes. I admire the Albert Memorial, certainly."

"And the Royal Academy?"

"Of course. That is an institution."

"Oratorios?" queried the Flea.

"Well, yes; sacred music, of course."

"Brahms, Wagner!"

"Heavy, you know, those Germans," retorted the Barnacle; "too much beer in them, I expect; but I liked Salome."

"Musical comedy?" questioned the Flea.

The Barnacle chuckled.

"The Gaiety is an institution," he observed.

"Like humbug, isn't it?" said the Flea.

"Now don't be impertinent, young man. You artists hop about like fleas, always quirping and biting somebody. Why can't you let things be?"

"They might atrophy, like the British Stage," chimed the Flea.

"And a good thing too. Most of you chaps are amoral. You ought to be locked up."

"What, the Poet Laureate?"

"No, he's all right; he's——"

"An institution, of course. And the Publishers?"

"Merchants!" the Barnacle flung back.

"And the libraries and the middlemen who sell artists' wares — most important people, these," riposted the Flea.

"England is a nation of middlemen," said the Barnacle, sententiously. "The Fire of London destroyed the Plague. Why shouldn't——?"

"Hold!" shouted the Flea. "You don't know what you are saying. You've no rhythm. You hang on there to that old whale, dead to all sense of beauty and inspiration. Your talk about art is crumpet talk. My dear fellow, a grasshopper is a better man than you are. He's a dancer, he is. Don't you know what that means? I'll tell you. The man who dances has the rhythm of life in him. All joyous things dance, Gamboge; icebergs, bears, from the very tadpoles in the ponds to the women of Spain, who are the finest dancers of all. But you—you don't even strike the sparks of a stone-breaker. You're merely a place-

hunter. That's the worst of being a salt-sea rodent; you look on beauty in a shamefaced way, you think it's — "

"Dangerous; yes, I do," said the Barnacle. "It's not necessary to the scheme and construction of nature which has all the light and shade and beauty that we need. What should I do, for instance, if this whale were suddenly to start writing four-act plays instead of going about his business and feeding himself like a gentleman? There's no censor of plays up here, you know, to stop him and bring him to reason."

"He might write a great play," the Flea retorted. "He might reveal something noble and beautiful that we did not know."

"Not he," said the Barnacle. "He'd starve or develop neurasthenia or attack the good old institutions of his kind."

"But if they were bad institutions?"

"No institutions are bad, young man," answered the Barnacle.

"Is the institution which drove Shelley out of the country good or wise or charitable; which denies Byron a resting-place in Poets' Corner; which censors the British theatre and literature, and . . ."

"My dear boy—for I see you are quite young," began the Barnacle, "Shelley, I believe, attacked what thousands of men believed in, and so did Byron. I don't go to the Play myself, but I know my uncle takes his nephews and nieces once a year to see the pantomime which, I am credibly informed, is invariably conducted on the highest plane of British rectitude. Man has to believe in something, besides himself. The average man believes then in institutions. And when you talk to me of Shelley and Byron I say to you, Who made the British Empire—they or John Bull? Answer me that."

"They," snapped the Flea, heroically. "For they will live when many a John Bull institution has gone where Exeter Hall and the House of Lords went the other day; they are everlastingly the music of our English tongue."

"You must have a robust conscience to say that."

"I'm glad you said that, for that again is an institution, only you don't know who said it, and possibly don't follow my nference.

Here stands a post,
Who put it there?
A better man than you—
Touch it if you dare!

You are the post, Shelley and Byron were robust consciences. They did touch it—and they knocked it down. And I say that just as the postulate and meaning of progress is revaluation and adjustment, and there is no finality in the things of this world, so the thinkers and artists and idealists are the architects of constructive life, not the hero-soldiers who destroy it."

"Little Englander," mocked the Barnacle.

"A cheap jibe in this Georgian era," returned the Flea; "the very music-halls have got beyond that to-day. You see, what with your institutions—one of the strongest of which is hypocrisy in England—your Censor—one of the few survivals of Tudor antiquity—and your Puritanism which destroyed joy and the critical attitude, the playhouses have lost artistic vitality, and are soulless and uncreative. The music-hall, on the contrary, has been saved by cosmopolitanism which, like Art, admits no censorship and no institutions but only the canons of taste and decency. Art ——"

"I wish you wouldn't always throw that word in my face," the Barnacle interposed. "You spout about tonality and beauty like a Pre-Raphaelite sipping tea in her peacock boudoir. The critical attitude is revolutionary. Wait till you have unmarried daughters, young man. You wouldn't like to find your wife poring over Scandinavian tragedies instead of minding the house and cooking the dinner, eh?"

"But, my dear friend, English girls don't learn cooking; their great idea seems to be to quit the home. Your institutions don't educate them in any serious or sensible attitude at all. You show them the apple and refuse them the core. It is the modern sickness, and English 'Varsity men are just the same. The institution unfits them for life. They come down by the score—philathletic bankrupts."

"Neo-impressionism, I know," growled the Barnacle. "You'd better take to golf."

"No," returned Pulga; "there ought to be some people in the country who don't 'foozle,' and I say to you that our gentleman's English education is out of date."

"Is it? 'The playing fields——'"

"The old tag," the Flea struck in; "they were 'milling' grounds in Wellington's days, but boys no longer fight. No son of mine shall be troubled with Balbus until he has learned to jump over the wall *himself*, that is the object of education. If my son——"

"You'd turn him into a foreign beer-student, I know."

"Well, there are no gentlemen nowadays," retorted the Flea. "Plutocracy and Shaw killed that; there are only men and gentlewomen."

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"I think we'd better change the conversation," enjoined the Barnacle. "You artists have neither scruples nor principles; that is why it is essential to keep a clapper on your works; and I'm very glad there is a Censor, for my part."

The Flea laughed uproariously.

"He's simply an institution, Gamboge, merely part of the grand conspiracy of Puritan hypocrisy which blights the artistic sense of Englishmen. It's only a veneer, though. In England you can say anything, if you only don't say it *truthfully*. London revelled in Scheherazade, but it refused operatic Salome the head of the Music Hall. And yet, when the Boer war was on, Kruger, 'Old Oom Paul,' was held up to national ridicule because he was a Puritan and read the Bible. Never forget that, Gamboge, Ah, the English can be awfully canny when it suits them—when there is money in it—diamonds. But there's not supposed to be money in Art. It's a much higher thing to be a superannuated public school idler than to be an artist, because of the blind fetish of what is called character, but——."

"Character! What have you to say against that?"

"This," rejoined the Flea. "We have turned character into another institution. It has become an idol instead of an ideal. And the result is that Englishmen are fast losing their character."

"Losing it!" stuttered the Barnacle.

"Aye, losing it. I refer to the class you call the gentry, of course. The Victorian gentleman had character and some Greek, but the average man in spats to-day is a metagnostic, or afternoon chap. His "classy" classical education unfits him for the scramble of modern competition. Lessoned in dead languages all through the most receptive years of his life, he has unlearnt the art of life. It is not the 'Varsity men to-day who are doing things, whether in literature, in art, in politics, in business; they have lost

* Editorial excision.

their hold on the country, as the priests lost it, as the hereditary nobility lost it. This is the era of 'Everyman's Library.'"

"Everyman's insurance, you mean!" chortled the Barnacle.

"Aye, the Scotchman let loose with a hundred pounds' worth of education in his noddle."

"It's all the fault of the Radicals."

"It's the fault of the institution, my dear sir, which stays them up to a wooden fetish. It is largely the reason why grey-haired ladies slap the faces of policemen. The infallibility of man has got found out. A young B.A., who had knocked about Town for three years without finding a job, said to his father the other day: 'I'm not worth £100 a year to anyone. Though I've written out I don't know how many lines of Virgil and Homer as impositions, they tell me I can't even write a readable leading article. I know nothing about business. I've no talent. I've no faculty. True, I'm scratch at golf, was a fez, a sprinter, a bit of an oar, but I've no commercial asset. I'd better go out and brand calves.'"

"What's that got to do with character?" sneered the Barnacle.

"This, that it's character mis-applied. He was a fine lad, too," said the Flea, reflectively. "Yet the braw boy from Manchester beats him all the way. He learned to take his coat off at the age of fourteen, but the other fellow only takes his coat off at play. Muddling about with dictionaries and the dead languages doesn't teach a man to work. He gets stereotyped into a class, with a class slang and outlook. It's a great pity. England needs those men. But she needs ideas more, and so the lad who has been taught by experience that efficiency is better than form——."

"Enters Parliament, we know, on £400 a year in a cricket cap," snapped the Barnacle. "You're a prig, young fellow, that's what you are. You want taking down a peg."

"Quite so," exclaimed Pulga, delightedly, "because I dare criticise. Now let me tell you this: It was the institution business that killed the House of Lords—no one dared criticise and so reform it. It was the institution business that got so distressingly revealed in the Boer war. It is the class institution bogey that saps the artistic and critical attitude of Englishmen so that we go to the Opera for show, to the Play for a giggle, to books for recreation.

We have become incapable of intellectual enjoyment, and there is no salon, no conversation, no Bohemian centre even in all London. It is the institution attitude of the ruling classes that is driving the new board school educated generation of Englishmen into the Social-Democratic idea. It is the institution of 'muddling through' which leaves it to an artist to tackle the scandal of London fog. We call it character; but in reality it is mental apathy."

As the Barnacle appeared to be asleep the Flea continued.

"So the quick-witted tradesman runs the show. He has commercialised the whole sense of artistic endeavour. Only *Punch* criticises nowadays. The showman dislikes it, and so Mr. Charles Hawtrey is obliged to appear always as a charming 'liar' in Anglicised versions of French plays."

"Small hope for England, anyway," drawled the Barnacle. "Only a Tory protector can save the country now, unless the Halsbury——"

"No club can save much nowadays," interrupted the Flea.

"England is remarkably healthy, if you ask me. I've a great belief in the educated Midlands."

"I wish you'd stop those pimply sophistries, young man," said the Barnacle. "You'd better try 'New Thought.'"

"The women are going mad about it, I'm told," answered the Flea; "but I've got the faith of Art, which is the greatest of all faiths. It stirs Empires as the wind flogs up the seas. All artists are religious, you know. That is why they are so sincere."

"See the froggies hop about, hop about, hop about,"

sang the Barnacle. "I was at a kindergarten, once."

"Don't follow you," returned Pulga, a little testily.

"Well, teach your grandmother——"

"Wrong again. No one but a fool would try to teach his grandmother. We want to teach the young. The chief thing nowadays is to teach gentlemen how to help themselves, and to help the others to teach the gentlemen. That's the Democratic idea, that is, and a critical one too."

"You Limehouse coxcomb," said the Barnacle, tartly. "I'll put the League for the Suppression of the Critical Attitude upon you. The secretary is looking for a campaign, I know."

The Flea laughed.

"There's the English Press, the sacred right of Free Thought in England; you forget that, Gamboge."

"The Press won't touch the sacrosanct institutions of England," returned the Barnacle.

"You surprise me," said the Flea, ingenuously. "I shouldn't have believed it."

"No, that's just it, young cockalorum. You don't know your England. Well, you'll find out some day. The one thing you can't do is to run counter to what happens at the moment to be considered the 'right thing.'"

"Really!"

"Certainly. Week-ends, for instance, roller skating, hobble skirts, the lounge suit, the one-step, votes for . . ."

"Dear me, you mean you have to bide your time."

"That's it. It's fashion that runs the world nowadays."

"Very hard on artists, isn't it?"

"Oh, it's all in the give and take. I'm told that silk merchants suffered terribly when women left off the under petticoat."

"You surprise me. Then we artists are like osprey feathers. Our plumes are pulled out of us with hideous pain, and worn—when we are in fashion."

"Well, you're a feather-headed lot, anyway, so a man has to be tactful."

"But tact is not Art?"

"I thought," said the Barnacle, "the art of art was to hide it."

"Art is reality, it is the expression of truth; it cannot be kibbled like that, or it will die of impurity and inertia. It's horrible."

"Nonsense," interjected the Barnacle; "the artist must learn to luff."

"To luff!"

"That's it. Like the mariners of England."

"I see, sail as close to the wind as he can. How moral!"

"Well, that's John Bull."

"Surely, dear Mr. Barnacle, surely that's all wrong. Art is a call, fire the Ancients called it. You can't serve God and Mammon, you know. The man who has got something to express must do it bravely and truthfully."

"Tactfully, my boy, tactfully."

"But Art is universal, like Christianity. 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.' You remember the deathless

words. Well, of such is the kingdom of Art, which is the kingdom of Truth and Beauty."

"They are beautful words," the Barnacle replied; "you are right there."

"And Love," threw in the Flea.

"Love!"

"Yes, Love is the soul of all Art."

"I never thought of that," said the Barnacle, meditatively.

"That is why all arbitrary restriction is fatal, strangling endeavour, destructive of both appreciation and attainment."

"I'm too old-fashioned to swallow that, young man."

"Another tag, Gamboge: old-fashioned is only another institution—to disarm criticism. It's like the man who says, 'I'm a good old Conservative' or 'I'm only a plain man.' What he really means is that he is too lazy to think things out himself. The Women's Movement is largely due to this apathy institution business. If you educate women you cannot expect them to remain mere 'lovely animals.' Shave a poodle and you find a skin like that of any other whelp. Criticism, Gamboge, I say. It's what England needs sorely."

"I've heard all that before," observed the Barnacle, "when I was a boy . . ."

At that moment a column of swishing hot air belched out of the whale's head, and suddenly the sleeping Behemoth seemed to be a mass of roar and bustle, like a gigantic printing press.

The Flea stared, rubbed his eyes, and looked so comically distressed that the Barnacle took pity on him.

"It's nearly breakfast-time," he said.

Pulga could find no words.

"I thought I was on the 'Right Whale,'" he stammered.

"So you are. It's the 'Dai . . . ,'" but the voice of the spruce, clean-shaven sub-editor who suddenly appeared on the scene got lost in the shriek of a flock of guillemots.

And out of the darkness a voice came to him, not unkindly.

"You've got a bubble in your thinking-pan. Why, the 'Adult Review' is—an institution."

The France of M. Caillaux

By "Verax"

Of all the influences which have been brought to bear upon France since the beginning of the century for the purpose of drawing her into harmony with the international movement, inaugurated in Germany, to detach her from Russia and Britain, that of the ex-Premier, M. Caillaux, has been the most potent. This politician went further than M. Rouvier would have ventured—so much further that it is not easy to say where he would have stopped had he been left to himself. One may reasonably infer from established facts that one of the direct consequences—but not one of the deliberate aims—of his policy would have been the dissolution of the political partnership known as the Triple Entente. But the attacks made upon him by his own countrymen, on the ground that he was resolved to force his country to withdraw from that international combine, are overdone. In fact, M. Caillaux only loved his own interests more, not those of his country less. He is understood to have been a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic, and was endeavouring to acquire control of the motley forces which would bear him onward and upward to that high eminence. But his lights being inadequate to illumine the vast area of his action, he tripped and fell.

The real ends of M. Caillaux' policy were baleful enough without making them appear more so. He was willing to render German influence more powerful in Europe, and supreme in French Equatorial Africa, and to abide by the consequences of these innovations. In the Ottoman Debt Commission, German aims were to be furthered by French diplomacy; the Paris money market was to be opened to certain German securities, including, of course, the Baghdad Railway Loans; and the Triple Alliance was to draw upon France—through Austria and Hungary—for its financial resources to be employed against the Powers of the Triple Entente. That is all; but it is quite enough.

Everything else that Germany craved would have followed in the natural course of things, whether M. Caillaux deliberately willed it or not.

France has been saved from a catastrophe by her own people's unslumbering instinct of self-preservation which got upon the scent before it was too late. But the causes which brought her within sight of ruin are still steadily operative. What happened yesterday may occur again to-morrow; for the salutary action of the nation on its representatives is fitful and uncertain. The Austrian loan denied a few weeks ago in one form may be floated a few months hence in another form; and, say what one will, that portends a European war. The ease with which ruinous measures may be adopted by a Cabinet or a Minister without the approval or knowledge of the nation or its chief, is truly disquieting. All France, all Europe, is still under the thrilling impression of the arbitrary and disastrous policy inaugurated by M. Caillaux. And that impression is heightened enormously by the self-complacency with which the members of his Cabinet, with the sole exception of M. de Selves, published a collective letter to their chief in which they pay a high tribute to his policy and his methods. What he did, they say, was well done! The conclusion is that there is nothing to remedy. Everything is for the best in the model Republic. Of all the symptoms which alarm France's friends and rejoice her enemies, this is undoubtedly the most alarming. M. Delcassé also signed that letter of commendation and surprised his friends disagreeably. They cannot account for his action. Frankness compels outsiders to admit that he was logical, for however the aims of the two statesmen may differ, M. Delcassé's methods, when he was at the Quai d'Orsay, were in essentials identical with those of M. Caillaux. The two men felt and acted as republican Tsars.

And the French Foreign Office is not alone to suffer from these personal pranks. It is but one of many State departments, all of which are labouring under the same insidious malady. Heretofore, in view of that ailment, reticence or euphemism was the cue of France's foreign friends. In reality, frankness is the true sign of goodwill. It needs much courage at the present moment for an Englishman or a Russian to play the part of candid friend to our virtual ally. But the *rôle* is essential to the success of the piece in which all three are vitally interested. A

disease to be successfully healed must be recognised, and if it be a well-wisher who diagnoses it all the better.

To assert roundly that the Republic is not what it seems, and that the staff on which it leans for support is a broken reed, has a brutal ring about it. But can it be dismissed as untrue or discredited as an exaggeration? And, if not, had it not better be faced? Look at the Navy. For some time past a fervent patriot has furthered its growth and watched over its destinies. But a glimpse at the list of naval mishaps during those six months is enough to arouse painful misgivings. If we study the inner organisation of the Service and compare the details and the *ensemble* with those of Germany and Austria, we are grieved beyond words; for we discover little to warrant even modest hopes, and much to justify our worst fears.

But the Army is the true *pièce de résistance*. And it is fair to say that the French Army of to-day is incomparably superior to the French Army of ten years ago. To begin with, the human materials are splendid: the officers are enlightened, enterprising, dauntless; the men are brave and capable of heroism; but there is no unity of direction. The poison of political intrigue paralyses the arm of the nation. Petty jealousy deprives the country of the services of its most competent champions. What one chief does to-day, another will undo to-morrow. Unity of views, singleness of purpose are lacking. The Army,* which by its nature should be an absolutist monarchy on a small scale, is transformed into a democratic republic with anarchist tendencies. The ultimate results, so far as one can forecast them to-day, are bound to be disastrous.

In Germany it is the opposite process which is taking place. There the State is modelled on the Army, and politics are subordinated to military needs.

Of what avail is an army if it cannot be brought to the front in time? It might as well be a set of toy soldiers. And in Germany and in Russia the conviction prevails among members of the General Staff that that is precisely the case with the army of the Republic. The corps are there; they are composed of splendid fighting material, but they cannot be sent to the front in time to strike the enemy or to parry his stunning blow. As a means of military transport, the French railways are among the worst in

* Of course the writer is aware that this is not the popular opinion of the French services held in England.

Europe. Constant accidents, fantastic mishaps, endless delays, chequer their records at the best of times. But a real test of what may be expected of them was afforded this autumn by a failure of the fruit crops in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland, and an abnormal export of French fruit from Brittany and Normandy. The demands on the French railways resembled those which mobilisation would make. But there was one important difference: mobilisation comes unexpectedly, the transport of fruit was *foreseen and provided for* to the extent of 15,000 waggons.

It is worth while looking at the way in which this fruit harvest was conveyed over the 600 miles which separate the places where it grew from the German frontier, for the whole story has been studied in its pettiest details by the General Staffs of Berlin, Rome, Vienna, and St. Petersburg.* None of these waggons, it appears, reached their destination in less than a fortnight, and these record-breakers were but a few. Most of them took three weeks, while some were four, five, and even six weeks on the way. The average speed is thirty miles a day, which a German military train accomplishes in one hour. The German goods trains running to the western frontier go from five to eight times more rapidly than the French. And no wonder. What the latter lack are side stations, engines, properly laid rails, and sound rolling stock. *Excusez du peu.* The rolling stock of several French companies, such as the Paris-Lyons-Méditérranée, the Paris-Orléans, the Est, and the Ouest is good; that of the Nord is wretched beyond words. A little shock shattered some of them to pieces.

If we compare these dismal failures with the marvellous achievements of German administration, the right conclusions will force themselves upon us without more ado.

It can no longer be doubted that the consideration which the Republic heretofore enjoyed in Europe has undergone a marked decline. It has been judged by its fruits. The financial policy of the State has been passed in review and condemned by no less a personage than the present Prime Minister, M. Poincaré. Diplomacy has proved to be a box with a double bottom, from which painful surprises spring up at times and frighten the best friends of the French nation, who are not necessarily friends

* See the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3rd December, 1911.

of the semi-Socialist Republic of autocrats. The driving force in France is neither adequate, nor steady, nor constant. Personal and party interests furnish the motives for action, not patriotic fire, nor a single ingrained sense of duty like that of the Germans.

It would be unkind to disguise the fact that the tide of influential opinion among France's allies and friends is now swelling in favour of real government manifesting itself in military and naval efficiency, in unity of views, and in combined action. They have no wish to interfere even indirectly. Adverse feeling towards the temporary Tsars of the Republic is undoubtedly gaining volume. From the force and the weakness of these dictators anything may be hoped and feared, from a secret treaty to a complete change of front. And this is a tremendous peril for Europe. Foreign States are powerless to remedy this anarchic condition of things. But no Government, however friendly, can without injustice to its own people, fail to reckon with the dangerous surprises with which it may at any moment be faced. This unwelcome necessity is now recognised and Statesmen are already cautiously taking ground, calculated to render the working of written and unwritten agreements with France more amenable to cool calculation and less subject to the moods of well-meaning but mistaken spokesmen of the Republic.

It is not improbable that actions and policies, the mere statement of which would in the past have provoked immediate response on the part of certain friendly States, will henceforward be closely scrutinised as to their causes before the stipulated steps are taken.

Play of the Month

"Œdipus Rex."

"And the things of God, they fail
As mist on the wind away."

If the choric elders are right, assuredly it is not so with the things of man. For the *Œdipus* (of Reinhardt) leaves us with one staggering impression—an impression almost of awe before the sublimity of Greek art. The other day we saw at Covent Garden the highest achievement of modern theatrical development, the Russian dancers. *Œdipus* takes us back, through the art of the fifth century, to the age and spirit of mythology, with incest, curses, pollution, sacrificial doom, and the cruelty of the beasts as theme and atmosphere; yet what manner of man or woman is that who did not find it beautiful and young, supreme still in the whole range of tragedy! Consider how unavoidably imperfect atmospherically this performance of *Œdipus* is there in Covent Garden—without the sun of ancient Thebes, the gleaming marble, the statuary, the colossal magnitude of the Grecian theatre with the blue sweep of the hills beyond; without the language, the incomparable mimetic dexterity of the Greek players, the statuesque situations, rhythm, declamation, movement, the purity and flexibility of the voices, above all, without that spirit of cohesion and devotion which, as we know, united the spectators with the play and the chorus, who were the ideal, the poetic, spectators in a common festival of art and religion. All that is necessarily lacking—the Pagan soul, the Grecian love of beauty, the spirit of solemnity and Theistic awe. We went (as usual) rather tired after our day's work; bored with the weather; simply curious. We came away enthralled, almost Pagan.

We became part of that wonderful crowd supplicating with a thousand outstretched arms Œdipus, the King, half man, half dæmon, that strange combination of tyrannical pride and cruelty, nobility, truthfulness, and passion upon whom the curse of Apollo had fallen. The very

chorus, painfully remembered from our school days, and later on in life voted generally to be a nuisance, we saw and heard with a feeling akin to reverence. We are not likely to forget the performance of Mr. Hubert Carter as Choragus; the dignity of rhythmical movement, the beauty of the choric whispers, "Œdipus, Œdipus;" the tragic illusion these bearded elders inspired; the magic of their invocations to the Deity—"I-ê! I-ê!"

No diamonds in the boxes. No peering about to see who is there. No curtain. No interval—and none, positively none, needed. From the first moment of that waving forestry of naked arms and swell of Pagan supplication our modern soul takes flight. The old Gods have it. We are back thousands of years among the wild mountain mysteries of Kithairon. "Has Lady Pluto got on her twenty rows of black pearls?" Who cares? Apollo, the "Wolf-God," has come into our world again, and we, we with our "Old Charlies" and all the rest of the feeble business, we go back for some two hours, *malgré nous*, to the spirit of Greek art, and enjoy it; and would that we, too, could rise from our seats and rush towards the *Thymele* where stands Œdipus Rex, destined by God to slay his father and live in incest with his mother.

Afterwards, yes, it is easy to put on our modern spirit and quote a tag from the ancient commentators to show how far more artificial than the plots of Pinero or Sutro this thing of Sophocles is; how really we cannot to-day accept either the ingenuousness of Œdipus or the levity of Jocasta or the well-worn melodramatic bit about the house-thrall, the one man who can "give the show away," and finally does turn up in true old-time Adelphi fashion to denounce and confound the villain. It is easy to say all that afterwards. But in the presence of Œdipus, Œdipus is King. The whole effect is cumulative, so intense, so real, dignified, tragic and yet beautiful, that we are all moved with one afflatus towards the inevitable doom, and almost welcome it with relief when we see the blind King stagger forth upon his calvary of woe and anguish ere the last "darkness finds him without pain."

Is it the genius of Reinhardt or of Sophocles that inspires these players to such heights? I am inclined to think it is Sophocles, for I have heard poor players say that Ibsen acts itself. It is a fine performance anyhow. Martin Harvey is Attic. His playing of the part must go

down as one of the great things of the stage—the Greek principle of beauty shone upon the whole thing. His oratory, his statuesque posturising, his fire and dignity are astonishing. In fine, the cast is wholly admirable.

And Jocasta! Even Ibsen never drew woman better than that. There is no such psychological study in all Shakespeare, for her counterpart, Lady Macbeth, is a wooden thing beside her. The Greeks, of course, would have had a man to play the part. We, certainly, ought to have Mrs. Patrick Campbell—which is not to say that Miss McCarthy did not play with remarkable power and intelligence.

And Tiresias, the Seer, the old blind prophet of evil, cringing with mock-goodness, he is eternally of the stage. The theatre has not improved on his type. He is the evil genius, an adult Puck, the Spielmann of the Germans, without whom neither man nor the Gods would seem able to play. The modern melodramatic villain dates from him. He deserves to be hissed nightly, like that scoundrel in "The Silver King."

"I-ê! I-ê!"

O, Apollo, bring us back to this art that you and your Gods invoked. Stay with us. Help and teach us to love and render such beauty that man gave to you long centuries ago, seeing that we Britons have at last come to worship at your shrine.

But these words will not be found in Professor Gilbert Murray's admirable, if not inspired, translation.

S. O.

Books of the Month

ART

STYLE IN MUSICAL ART. By C. HUBERT H. PARRY, Bart., Mus. Doc. Macmillan. 10s. net.

The main material of this work was, as the writer tells us, planned for a projected long-continued series of lectures during his tenure of the Professorship of Music at Oxford. Taken as a whole the book in its present form is an amplifying and development of many of the ideas first given to the public in the writer's "Evolution of the Art of Music." One constantly meets a hint then given, and now worked out to its logical conclusion; and although the title of the present work might lead the reader to expect a purely technical treatise, devoted to a criticism of style pure and simple in its evolution during the centuries that music has slowly struggled towards its present immensely complex condition, one finds that and much more; and how much more it is almost bewildering really to recognise. If style is the dress in which a work of art is presented to us, Method might be the name we should give to the individual composer's technical procedure. And in this work one wonders whether to be more struck by Parry's lofty idealism and high standard that he sets for his aesthetic judgment of art and the style of the finished product, or by the acute vision that sees right to the foundation of the Method and technical procedure of the enormous chain of artists whose work he brings under survey. His breadth of vision is so remarkable that one is sometimes struck by contrast by a certain Puritanism in his sympathies. This is the more noticeable seeing the whole-souled humanity of so many of the utterances, and the general optimism and even joy that he displays over the smallest effort of "men" (as he constantly calls them) to widen and develop the resources of the Art. One is tempted to wonder if his long and detailed analyses of the musical vulgarities of the music-hall songs and dances are worthy of the space given to them, or if the shop ballad is worthy of such serious abuse. We shall not abolish them, either by analysis or by condemnation, and as he so aptly himself quotes from a French writer—"the more we truly know the greater becomes the scope of our charity." And we can at least recognise that if the music of the music hall is pervaded by "mischief" and the shop-ballad by sickly sentiment, both for commercial ends, the number of hearers who realise that is enormously on the increase, and this fact robs the "mischief" and sickly sentiment of half their power for corruption. But apart from this one doubtful element the book is so teeming

with vitality, and many of the phrases and judgments are so just, so perceptive, and so illuminating, that they are bound to become household words amongst musicians, and even the public, and to exercise a lasting influence on our musical life. One could quote more copiously than is justifiable in the short space of review, for so many sides of the art, so many sides of life itself are discussed and so pungently, and often even wittily, that the book is full of a human interest that makes it fully as interesting, even amusing, to the amateur as to the professional musician. The style of writing, too, has a variety and resonance, and on occasions even beauty, that in a large measure will make the reading of it attractive to any who have a real sense of Music, and its bearing on Life. His appreciation of Palestrina for instance—"With him all is beauty of motion and tone; expression of a passionate kind is never attempted. The music flows in crystalline and pellucid purity; mysterious and subjective, the very ideal of purely devotional art"—is a summing up both descriptive and discerning in a way it would be hard to improve upon. Again, when discussing the essential capacities of the various instruments, and comparing those of the pianoforte and the organ he says—"when massive and sustained discords are given on a pianoforte they always suggest organ effects, and *we interpret them rather by association than by actual impression.*" The italics are our own, for the phrase so aptly describes the truth of the matter when we consider the impressions made on us by variety of *timbre*. And later there is a development of the same idea—"the violin has all the subtlest and the most exquisite qualities of the woman. She ravishes our souls with the mere beauty of her tone; and it is not by concrete force that she compels us, but by the fineness of the artistic texture of what she can do." Phrases of a similarly just analysis are constant throughout the book, and one that touches on the subject of Form runs as follows: "The methods of organisation of art, like the multifarious organisation of all the components of the body of man, are the fruit of long processes of development. They may be said to be, as in the case of man, the result of the reactions of the environment upon the sensitive material." His perceptions are always clear, too, when discussing the weight of external influences on the inner impulses, as is obvious in what he says from time to time on the much-worn subject of the two schools of Romanticism and Classicism; and in pointing to Beethoven as a meeting point of the two he makes either tendency more clear, and the use of the words has for once a practical definition—"The meaning of his work was so little understood that both parties claimed him as their exemplar. Those who wanted music to express something to them rightly pointed to the romantic traits in his work: those whose imaginative qualities were limited to music itself pointed to the astonishing perfection of form, which was in this case expanded to such a wealth of variety." And in a sentence he throws a strong light on Bach's methods in this direction: "The truth is that though excess of

harshness seems to be superfluous in absolute music, in which design counts for so much, in music which has to deal with human things external to itself, there is nothing in art which can be barred on account of its ugliness so long as its existence is justified by the context"—a saying that is the best of defences of ugliness-in-the-right-place. One could continue to quote indefinitely, but the book is such a coherent whole, such a genuine development of one central idea from the outset to the end, that it would be unjust to take many of the phrases from their context. But we may be forgiven for citing the first and almost the last phrases of the final chapter. "Quality is that which endures; that which maintains its vitality and speaks to men and arouses their interest in spite of changes of fashion, changes of taste, changes of method and even of language . . . . . Those who are at all awake see on every side the encroachments of what is called materialism . . . . . Music at the moment is one of the most hopeful antidotes to such materialism, but only so when it is of the highest quality. . . . . Real music appeals to the higher faculties and also enhances them. If it is to be effective in any wide social sense it must be of the very best quality."

A History of Painting. By Haldane Macfall, with a Preface by Frank Brangwyn. T. C. & E. C. Jack. 8 Vols. 7*s*. 6*d*. net each.

Art has had historians before to-day, and there is actually no reason why we should have another history merely for the sake of history; but the defence of Mr. Haldane Macfall's "History of Painting" is that it is something more than history and certainly something less in the academic understanding of that term. Mr. Macfall is concerned historically with pyschology rather than with events, and critically he is concerned with ideas, or what he would call "significances" rather than with technique, although his book does not lack the necessary data of history any more than it lacks a keen critical sense of the technical values of style and form. In taking such a course the writer has shown wisdom, for after all, painting, more particularly for the general public for whom this history is designed, is not an affair of technique, useful as some knowledge of technique may be; a man may appreciate a picture with depth and subtlety even though he lack entire knowledge of the media of the craft of painting. The scheme of Mr. Macfall's history is an attempt to give what might be called an ideographic interpretation of the great paintings of the world, looking upon art, in his own words, as "a window through which we gaze into the soul of man in all ages." This panorama of aesthetic ideals and history is comprised in eight volumes, each of which deals with a definite period, the whole being illustrated with 200 full-page mounted plates in colours. As a piece of book-making the publishers are to be congratulated on their achievement. Messrs. Jack have produced a dignified and even beautiful book. The types used are exceedingly

pleasing to the eye, and there is a boldness and distinction about the building of the page which deserves the highest commendation, although the use of mounted plates, one side flapping loose, is highly questionable. The coloured plates, however, are remarkably well reproduced, taking into consideration the necessary limitations which are inevitable in making such a book commercially possible at so small a price. As for Mr. Macfall, he is always impressive as a critic because of certain endowments which are, but ought not to be, accidental in the average critic. He is, in short, possessed of imagination and a philosophic sense of aesthetics, a knowledge of technique born of actual practice, and, above all, rare gifts as a literary artist. His book has all those picturesque qualities which anyone with a knowledge of his record would expect of him. Indeed, our use of the word panorama describes in a way the literary characteristics of the book more effectively than we intended. That is its literary weakness as well as its strength ; Mr. Macfall is inclined to overdo the picturesque characteristics of his style, he has a Meredithian love of a phrase for its own sake, and many of his pages give one the impression of that one time prevalent form of hand-writing which confused the issue of the written page by bursting into ornate but unnecessary flourishes. His very chapter headings are indicative of this weakness, as for instance " Wherein the mighty mantle of big George falls upon a giant," or again, " Wherein the British painters take the figure into the open air, and Realism passes into the glamour of the sunlight." But after all these flourishes do not actually subtract anything from the essential value of the book, not nearly so much as Mr. Macfall's vexatious obsession for such words as " significance," " utterance," " orchestration," and the whole gamut of variations on the word " sense." His capacity for ringing the changes upon certain words bids fair to destroy the value of a literary style which is otherwise agreeably effective and robust. As it is, the virility of Mr. Macfall's thought is sometimes lost in the vehemence of its expression. A certain amount of this vehemence is obviously real because Mr. Macfall does not pretend to be an impartial chronicler. He is a theorist always striving to square the incidents of the history of painting with the idea, which he shares partially with Tolstoy, that all art is the conscious expression of emotion for the sake of communication. And in effect this new " History of Painting " is practically a lengthy dissertation upon that theme with examples both literary and pictorial of the greatest work of the painters of all ages. In the course of his long and eloquent study, Mr. Haldane Macfall broaches innumerable contentious points which whilst being unnecessary if not actually confusing to the average reader, will delight the lover of artistic discussion. The very fact of their being recorded and co-ordinated no matter how impartially, and impartiality is not necessarily a virtue, will also prove food for the philosopher of art as well as the dialectician. Mr. Macfall's faults are of commission rather than omission, and it is strange to

find a writer who has admitted in the public press his personal knowledge and even friendship for one of the greatest caricaturists of modern times, Ospovat, omitting mention of him in a book which goes out of its way to name lesser painters, and sometimes those who have dipped their buckets into the well of his genius. Neither does he make any reference to the work of Mr. Max Beerbohm. Such lapses as these, inexplicable though they are, do not remove materially from the value of the book, which on the whole is an arresting and stimulating work as rich in enthusiasm as it is in knowledge and grasp of the wide field of the world's pictures.

MODERN DANCING AND DANCERS. By J. E. CRAWFORD FLITCH. Grant Richards. 15s. net.

London has seen the Russian dancers, and already the old boys who used to silence us, whenever we spoke about dancing, with the crushing name of Taglioni have no longer a leg to stand upon, and Mr. Flitch's work clinches the matter. There is no excuse for us to assume a virile ignorance about dancing and the gestures of the dance, no longer any reason why Miss Phyllis, ætat 17, should not read Mr. Flitch and confound her grandfather with the historic names which she can cull by the dozen from this elaborate tome and describe them too from the many illustrations which are quite admirable and up-to-date. It is not a technical work, not really a history of the art, but a lively, well-written and on the whole, justly appraised chronicle of dancers and dancing including such phenomena as Maud Allan, Lottie Collins and the Tiller Girls, who all come in for their full share of appreciation as Bahnbrecher in the art. Behind the praise, however, Mr. Flitch does criticise. He justly estimates Miss Duncan highly. He shows us how Lottie Collins gave us an Anglicised can-can of Montmarte in the heyday of the Moulin Rouge in her Ta-ra-ra dance; how skirt dancing became the fashion, finally sterilising English dancing into the high-kicker until the great art came to us from Russia the other day, where it has flourished and grown into the most perfect form of prose gesture ever seen under the guidance of the painter, manager and musician. It is no longer the fashion for the "fifth" not to dance, and thank Heaven, young men do get round the ball-room nowadays with their "one-steps" and "ghost-walks" with some measure of grace. What the Russians have taught us is the necessity of long and assiduous training, a standard, a dance that is an art. We now know that a woman is not a great dancer because she appears on the stage as naked as the censor will allow her to, and that society women do not necessarily make dancers because they were born with titles. This really charming volume is encouraging. Just the book to turn over with Phyllis or the children on the sofa.

ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

SHAKESPEARE: A STUDY. By DARRELL FIGGIS. Dent. 5s. net.

There is an efficiency which we are accustomed to call Teutonic about this book. It compels our admiration. We admire the hardness of a Scottish or German quality, in this Mr. Figgis' cerebration; and our respect is only tempered, as it is partly generated, by the consciousness of its mechanical character. You put in at one end the complete works of any author ancient or modern, and there issues at the other into the hands of a properly impressed public a study which no scholar need be ashamed to read: everyone indeed should read it with profit, though few will do so with any pleasure. It lacks tenderness, sympathy, charm. Personally we prefer the method of Professor Mackail who returns from the enchanted woods of poesy with a handful of roses.

Mr. Figgis has read, macerated and remembered everything that has been written about Shakespeare. Thus his two chapters on Shakespeare's Life and Stage are admirable summaries, and would be universally commendable if they were more clearly and simply written. The useful drawing of the stage at the Globe "conceived," we are told, "by Darrell Figgis," differs in no important detail from that given by Professor Albright, but we are glad to have it here. Of course, Albright's "Shakesperian Stage" is referred to in the notes, so it is rather surprising to find no mention of Professor Raleigh, whom again Mr. Figgis has followed in his very illuminating analysis of the opening of the second act of "Julius Cæsar." Similarly Mr. Figgis does well to adopt whole-heartedly Mr. Frank Harris's method when he comes to deal with Shakespeare's personality. The remaining chapters, treating "His Craft," "His Art," "His Thought," we have no space to examine fully; but it is enough to say that they contain many statements that provoke violent opposition: as for instance, that in Tragedy "Beauty is continually frustrated," or that in Tragedy the reconciliation of the issue is relegated "to a Higher Court" beyond the limits of the play: or that there is "little poetry" in "Love's Labour Lost." Many ingenious combinations and illuminations, as, his comparison between the action of Puck in "Midsummer Night's Dream," and of an Ironic Destiny in "Romeo and Juliet," most of which are spoiled by the pomposity of the subsequent deductions. Many confusions of thought, as "The husband that slew his wife when wild with liquor, is Realism: the splendour of first love, bringing thoughts of divinity, is Reality." Occasional exhibitions of ignorance: "The waves of the sea only rise and fall, they do not progress: it is the water that progresses through them, utilising them." Mr. Figgis's diction is so "furious and tropical" that we are almost tempted to hope that the remark, of Othello, "a terrible fire has spung up in his blood" does not contain a misprint. But the proof-reader should at least

have corrected the slip which makes Fuller, in the well-known quotation about the wit-contests with Shakespeare at the Mermaid, describe Jonson as "built lighter in learning."

FICTION

CARNIVAL. By COMPTON MACKENZIE. London: Martin Secker, 6s.

Quite a number of reviewers agreed, more wisely that they knew, in acclaiming "The Passionate Elopement" as the most promising "first novel" of 1911; and their agreement was the more creditable because the merits of that book were referable to little or nothing in the works of Mr. Arnold Bennett, of Mr. Galsworthy, or of Mr. H. G. Wells—three eminent writers who appear to furnish the present-day reviewer, between them, with all his touchstones of judgment and all his canons of taste, although it would be unfair (or, at any rate, rash) to assume that they monopolise his research among the classics. But "The Passionate Elopement" was, after all, a study in *genre*; and because no artist who ties himself to a mode can grow to full stature, we have all been pleasantly expectant over Mr. Mackenzie's second book. Well, here we have it, in "Carnival"—brimful of life (so *that* is all right, and it is the main point), full of artistic work, but by no means a satisfying work of art. It misses the unity of a work of art. It breaks in the middle, so that in retrospect one sees it as two different flowers awkwardly if eagerly—because the author found them both beautiful—wired upon one stalk. Actually the man does not live, and will not be born in a hurry, who can fuse into one harmonious tale the life of Bohemian London, whether of green-room or studio, with the life of pastoral Cornwall. (Believe one who, like Ogniben, has now known four-and-twenty leaders of revolt). Moreover, if these two artistically repugnant things could be reconciled in any one story, Mr. Mackenzie's "Jenny Raeburn" is the last heroine for that story. It is the firm conviction of one reader, at least, that she could never have married Mr. Z. Trewhella; Mr. Mackenzie has not seriously assaulted that conviction; and for that one reader all the conclusion of the book is therefore marred.

The story opens brilliantly and runs a brilliant course for some 250 pages; but the first wobble of its breakdown is suspected on p. 217 when Maurice, Jenny's romantic lover, first reveals himself (to use the language of the book) as a "rotter"; not merely "a rotter like all men" as Jenny in time had occasion to call him, but a "rotter" for any serious artistic purpose. He is not man enough to be worth anyone's while; and when he writes to explain his unmanliness—"I expect you'll think I'm heartless, but something has gone snap inside me," the reader assents: "Yes, that is what happens to mechanical toys." "Rotters," as Aristotle discovered

some time ago, are unequal to the toll levied upon character by the tragic art. We are done with Maurice, and resent the re-intrusion of such a fribble to provide the story with a grim climax. We admit, however, that our opinion here is disputable: the author may say that he *meant* the fellow to be unreal. But Jenny is real, and he cannot advance any such argument in excuse for her later surrender to such a creation as Danby. It is just such a thing as happens in any mere inartistic Harlot's Progress (Sudermann's "Das Hohe Lied," for example); but to real literature these freaks are strange, and the whole business awakens a mental and even physical repulsion, which is certainly not appeased when the author ends on the quotation, *Lugete O Veneres Cupidinesque*—immortal words, henceforth contaminated for what remains of one middle-aged worshipper's life-time. After p. 317 nothing really matters. As Jenny writes on p. 425, "Who cares?" That is the real vengeance of Jenny's case.

Mr. Mackenzie is so obviously born to do fine work—he has so obviously the root of the matter in him—that one day he will certainly be able to forgive this amount of censure from a true admirer. The censure does not come from any mid- or late-Victorian sentiment, but from applying certain hard rules which at least have the merit that they were thought out in a workshop. He has, in this reviewer's opinion, one gift at least that will triumphantly carry him through. He has—if one may whisper it, and if the compositor will here look out his very smallest type—the gift of all others most necessary just now—*an exquisite sense of beauty with a hunger for beautiful words to express it.* As Mr. Henry James once said, more or less, of Alphonse Daudet, "a new novel by him is among the most delightful literary events that can occur just now."

TANTE. By ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK. Arnold. 6*s*.

It is good in an age of story-telling fiction to come across a novel which does actually fulfil the functions of the novel by revealing life in character and temperament rather than in story and plot. Such a novel is Mrs. Sedgwick's "Tante." This book is a singularly fresh and arresting delineation of the more personal and intimate life that rotates about a star of the concert platform, clothed in compact and sensitive language which recalls Meredith but is always itself. Tante is the familiar name of the famous pianist, Mercedes von Marwitz, Baroness Okraska, a woman of assertive genius and what might be called dramatic egoism, which gobbles up the lives of retainers and takes the ovations of the music lovers of two hemispheres with a sort of pleased weariness. Everybody is in a state of nervous anxiety towards this hungry egoism, it reminds one of the mental state created by the coloured malingerer in "The Nigger of the Narcissus." Tante, however, is no malingerer, she is a force, an activity; beautiful and a genius, and she inspires everyone of her retainers with the spirit of sacrifice by her very kindliness and sympathy and tenderheartedness, as well as by her

genius. She is really a tyrant of kindliness, a monster of sentiment, exacting lives in exchange for her affection. Her enemies are of course those who do not respond to her absorbing affection, and one of these, Gregory Jardine, claims and wins the hand of Tante's ward, Karen, a delightfully child-like girl whom Madame von Marwitz found in a wood in Italy and adopted. Mrs. Sedgwick reveals with deft touches the bond between Tante and her retainers and how that bond demands the sacrifice of the latter, who are ever seeking to justify their condition. "As far as interest goes any one of her real friends counts for more than I do," says Karen to Jardine, "and you mustn't think that I mean to say that I believe myself the most loved; not at all. But I am the tender, home thing in her life; the thing to pet and care for and find waiting. It is that that is so beautiful for me and so tragic for her." Jardine asks, "Why tragic?" and Karen replies, "Oh, but do you not feel it? A woman like that, such a heart, and such a spirit—and no one nearer than I am? That she should have no husband and no child? I am a makeshift for all that she has lost or never had." That conversation suggests quite clearly the theme of this masterly tragi-comedy of personality. Mrs. Sedgwick has written a novel of insight and charm. One delights in her chapters, hurrying through them with proper anticipation but desiring to fall into thought upon passages and sentences which arrest by their depth or beauty.

THE REWARD OF VIRTUE. By AMBER REEVES. Heinemann. 6s.

We learn that mauve and gold bedrooms may be as sordid as Petticoat Lane, and that upper middle class marriages can reek of a squalor not at all mitigated by the sudden inheritance of five or six thousand a year. Here is a brutally cynical book where maternity is made unlovely, where marriage is prostitution, where Cupid is pale, having evidently been sitting up late to finish Brieux' plays. Miss Reeves possesses a brilliant attack and a brisk execution, which together with assurance and a complete absence of affectation provide her with an excellent success. Soon perhaps she will gain more than the reward of virtue in virtue itself, in hope and fire and vision. Then she will be able to leave her Kodak in the mauve and gold bedroom, and remembering that Notting Hill is very near to Notting Dale, devote her rare accomplishment to setting characters in relation to the world. This is not at all too much to expect from the promise and achievement of a first novel which, as it stands, is a veritable Undine.

STORIES IN GREY. By BARRY PAIN. T. Werner Laurie. 6s.

Not all in grey, by any means; so at least one thought while reading these stories. For while one or two, "Smeath" for instance, recall that little shilling book "Stories in the Dark," that curdled our blood about ten years ago, others sparkle with colour. Yet

there is nothing here of the humorous contentment of "Eliza": and perhaps Mr. Pain is right after all, and has worked like a pointillist painter, putting many colours in the detail, splashes of humour and brushmarks of wit, only so that the effect of the whole collection, when "remembered in tranquillity," may be grey. Irony is really Mr. Barry Pain's leading note. Undergraduates at Oxford used once to acquire second-hand for their most fastidious shelf a very early volume of his, "In a Canadian Canoe." There was a cynical touch in that which agreed with the cruelty of youth. He has learnt tenderness now: though he is still fond of chilling a romantic situation in a bath of common-sense—possibly to temper the blade of truth; which has the appearance of cynicism, as in the story called "Saint Martin's Summer." The charm of his humour and his literary skill never fail. If you want sentiment, a splash of pink, he can be sentimental without being sickly: there is "The Doll"—the very best sugar-candy, with none of the string left in it. But the best story in the book, "Too Soon and Too Late," is a tragedy written by a humorist, and begins and ends with a laugh.

POETRY

EMBLEMS OF LOVE. By LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE. Lane. 5s. net.

There are many ways in which a poet may make his attack on our critical judgment, and the first and foremost of these is not that he charm us, not that he win our sympathy with tenderness and grace, but that he compel our admiration by his power and strength. This greater quality of vigour or virility includes as a rule the lesser qualities of grace, but in Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie's case it is curiously not so. His passion we cannot deny; we are caught in its strong heat on almost every page of "Emblems of Love," yet scarcely ever is the strain relaxed, the grimness melted into smiles. The cup of his humanity hardly ever brims over into light and laughter, the light and laughter of high poetry one means, of course, for one has no grievance with Mr. Abercrombie that he does not make us laugh. This is a serious fault in a serious poet, for Mr. Abercrombie is certainly a serious and important poet who has by this work put himself into the forefront of contemporary English poets. This failing in his analysis traces down to one thing—a tendency towards melodrama. In many pages of this book Mr. Abercrombie is a melodramatist, a melodramatist on the plane of high poetry of course and using the word in a metaphysical rather than in a popular sense. There is a certain feeling of forcing and strain both in the language and the ideas of the pieces called "Vashti," "The Prelude," and "The Eternal Wedding," which prevents the reader surrendering himself to them. In "Judith," perhaps the best thing in the book, this fault is almost entirely absent, and we

have a powerful drama full of beautiful and effective imagery, sustained from beginning to end by a passion which is on the move all the time, thus giving the work a synthetic life that cannot be claimed for "Vashti."

The prosody of the verses, taking them line by line and page by page, also evidences this tendency to harshness and strain which spoils a good deal of what Mr. Abercrombie writes. The lines seldom run smoothly, nor do they suggest enough reserve left in the poet after their making. They are panting, grappling dour lines full of vigour to be sure, but it is an anxious vigour surer of itself than of the use it is being put to. Probably this comes from the author adopting a manner that is still a trifle too large for him. Consciously he has scorned any apprenticeship with lighter modes, and has gone at a bound to the vastest models. Give him time and he will master these models so well that, as far as one can see, the title "great poet" will come to be his, but great poet he is not at present. These poetic dramas of his are tentative displays in the big manner with big materials and rich resources of fancy, imagery, verbal dexterity and intuition. But looked at as complete pieces standing by themselves we see that they do not really stand at all. Their frameworks are merely conventional and not alive, and all the fine trappings and glittering effects superimposed on them cannot give them life. From this criticism "Judith" is partly exempt. There is some unity and imaginative conception of a play here as a complete thing, a perception that a poetic drama must be something more than an excuse for fine speeches and poetical effects.

All the poems in "Emblems of Love" may be said to be love poems, and their attitude and outlook on life, their psychology and philosophy are those generally of adolescence or at least immaturity. There is a rather too naïve and boisterous enthusiasm over the discovery of the importance of love that mature minds will find not altogether pleasing.

POEMS. By RUPERT BROOKE. Sidgwick & Jackson. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

The scholarly ironic spirit has polished these verses and given them the gleam of poetry. In the so voluminous discussions about the benefits of a classical education, one might have instanced such poems as these in which the critical mind has valued every word and is conscious of the sensual value of every emotion; and in which imagination of clever fancies gains in power by being restrained to clarity. All this sounds very dull, and Mr. Brooke is always delightful; if not with the delight of love and beauty with the delight of craftsmanship, which makes us enjoy even his emetic sonnet "A Channel Passage," a satyric masterpiece. His sonnets are always remarkable the first in the book which brims the verse form, and the individual emotion, with all the pathos of beauties dead is like an echo of Propertius, or like that sonnet of Ronsard. But Mr. Brooke shows

his poetic strength most notably in the couple of sonnets called "Menelaus and Helen," in which satire and tenderness are combined: one might say that the twenty-eight lines resume every spiritual attitude of humanity towards history—a destruction of all ideals and a final renascence of wonder. The first sonnet is the Trojan war, a romantic vision of the Iliad. Twelve lines of the second are full of the dreadful anti-climax of human heroics—age and rheumy decay. And then, just as the brutal picture becomes unbearable, the whole emotional effect is reversed, with the accumulated emotion of the whole, in the last couplet:

> "So Menelaus nagged; and Helen cried;
> And Paris slept on by Scamander side."

You may say it is only cleverness; but that last line, (skilfully sudden, if you like), simply takes your breath away. When you have recovered it, read, if you want to be charmed by melody and amused by the ironic imagination which justifies the ways of man to God, read that "Song of a tribe of the Ancient Egyptians," "On the Death of Smet-Smet, the Hippopotamus-Goddess."

SONGS OF JOY AND OTHERS. By WILLIAM H. DAVIES. London: A. C. Fifield. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

If anyone thinks there is no fine poetry being written in England now, let him get this little book at once; and if after reading it through he has not changed his opinion, let him be knocked on the head. Because really there can be no arguing about it. Lots of people, it is true, have written big books about Blake, but they have been mostly intent on showing that he was something besides a poet. When it comes to the pure lyrical cry, you either feel the ultimate thrill which is the real test of all poetry, or you don't. And it is this cry of the heart, the lyric in its most essential and ingenuous form, that Mr. Davies gives us in a manner which no English poet has surpassed. Most of such lyrics are songs of simple joy: Wordsworth's

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> The rainbow in the sky——"

and one could illustrate others by quotations from Ben Jonson, or Campion, and very many from Blake. But it must not be thought from this that Mr. Davies ever writes with artificial literary feeling; one might believe that he had never read a book of poetry in his life, so clearly does he always write from the urgent spring of his own emotion. And one might add, from all the strength of his life; for his songs are not all of joy. He sees London much as Blake saw it: our "marks of weakness, marks of woe" have not been wiped out in a hundred years; but, thank God, our poetry is as strong and clear as it ever has been.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

THE SECRET THINGS. By M. L. ANDREWS. Fifield. 1s. net.
POEMS. By P. L. BABINGTON. Cambridge: W. Heffer. 1s. net.
VERSES. By THOMAS BURKE. (No publisher or date).
THE LITTLE CITY. By W. R. CHILDE. Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.
PSYCHE. By FRANCIS COUTTS. London: John Lane.
POEMS OF MEN AND HOURS. By JOHN DRINKWATER. London: Nutt.
FIFTY POEMS by JOHN FREEMAN. London: Herbert & Daniel.
POEMS. By CHARLES GRANVILLE. London: Stephen Swift.
POEMS. By M. JOURDAIN. London: Truslove & Hanson.
HORIZONS AND LANDMARKS. By S. R. LYSAGHT. Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.
THE POET'S CALENDAR. By MARGARET MACDONALD. Fifield. 1s. net.
THE SEASONS' DIFFERENCE. By CHARLES MASEFIELD. Fifield. 1s. net.
THE BLOSSOMY BOUGH. Poems by SHAEMAS O SHEEL. Published by Shaemas O Sheel thru (sic) The Franklin Press, 124, West 19th Street, New York City.
POEMS. By MARNA PEASE. London: Elkin Matthews. 1s. net.
THE EPIC OF GOD AND THE DEVIL. By JOHN FREDERICK ROWBOTHAM, M.A. Oxon. Author of "The Human Epic," "The Epic of London," "The Epic of Charlemagne," "The History of Music," "The Poetry of the Troubadours." E. Bayliss & Son, 22, The Cross, Worcester.
THE CASKET SONGS AND OTHER POEMS. By E. B. SARGANT. London: Longmans, Green.
POEMS. By CHARLES ROBERT SMITH. London: A. C. Fifield.

There is a *cachet* of thoughtfulness about Miss Andrews' "Secret Things." She has flaws and lapses, to be sure; but she also has ambitions, as well as ideas both new and true, the outcome of a clear, homogeneous personality; all and any of which things would suffice to cover a multitude of sins, if such there were. "The Lilt of the Little Gods," for example, strikes altogether the right note, though we should be surprised to see blackbirds pouring music out of their *ebon flutes*. Who was it sang of

> The ousel-cock, so black of hue,
> With orange-tawny bill . . . ?

But perhaps she means their throats.

We like Mr. Percy L. Babington best in his Horatian mood:—

> Does this room please me? You, my friend, enquire.
> It does not. Pardon frankness. Though we've met
> Not this side twenty years, etc., etc.

and hope that in the course of time he will let something of the Roman's constitutional sanity play about the fads of modern life, with genial castigation. There is a vein—a rich social vein—to be exploited here.

The name of Mr. Thomas Burke is familiar to readers of this Review. His "Verses" do not palpitate with cosmic, Heaven-enfolding aspirations, but the Muse that inspires them is a discerning and lovable little lady, for all that.

Amid the pages of Mr. Wilfred Rowland Childe's "Little City" there hovers an air of vaporous benevolence, of roses, enchantments, and mediæval saintliness; to use a now obsolete phraseology, he is somewhat "intense." His verses are not always satisfactory.

> The pasturing hills and hill-sides beautiful
> Grow fat once more, and seem to be made full
> Of shepherds and bleating flocks and bales of wool—

all this, and there is a good deal of it, is rather dreadful stuff. And we wish he would follow Goethe's advice about grasping living life, and correct, likewise, his notions of the Middle Ages. After that, he might study certain aspects of the faith he loves so fondly; say, in Lea's History of the Inquisition. Yet we confess to a sneaking fondness for this volume. It may be because the poet is so wholly sincere in his dreamings and because his imagination, though undisciplined, is not disharmonious, despite such things as

> . . . . . *visions* in the trees,
> That *echo* to her ringing bell. . . . .

Mr. Francis Coutts' "Psyche" is a performance of more than ordinary good taste. Under his hand, the movement glides swiftly forward with deft discrimination. A few touches of modern sentiment—the faintest hints—are artfully interwoven and nowise cloud its azure serenity; they merely prove that the writer is what he should be—a child of his time, who has cast off Landor's incubus of pure classicism. For though the heart remains unchanged, we must weave, at times, new garments to clothe its ancient hopes and fears. And so, reading these well-wrought verses, we realise how much life is still throbbing in that fair Milesian fable embedded in the conglomerate of the old African romancer, and scholars will find it instructive to compare this poetic version with Pater's rendering in prose. The image of the veiled picture of Sais, its profound allegory, forms an unexpected, suggestive, and noble ending to the poem.

Among Mr. John Drinkwater's "Poems of Men and Hours" there are two—the first "For They have Need" dwelling on the sufferings of the City poor, while "London at Night" touches rather upon the spectacular aspects of the Thames Embankment—two poems which, under other circumstances, might have led us to indulge in a lay-sermon. We shall not succumb to that temptation. Yet whoever wanders at evening along that rolling flood framed in dimly-towering palaces and crossed by steamers and barges that steer in ghostly fashion about the waters must have wondered why so few of our poets have responded to its beauty and signification. They find it easier, no doubt, to warble a spring-song or two. The fierce pulsations of industry, the shiftings of gold that make and mar human happiness—these are themes reserved for the bard of the future who shall strike, bravely, a new chord, extracting from the dun facts of City life a many-tinted romance, even as out of that foul coal-tar some, who know

the secret, craftily distil most delicate aromas and colours exquisite. The bard of the future . . . maybe he is already upon us. If so, it is to be hoped that he will turn away betimes from those sinister associations of street-life and factories which are merely husks or bye-products, to contemplate the flower; the adult stage of human growth when men, at last, have emerged from their peevish and cantankerous childhood—perched enviously on castles, like cocks on their dung-hill—to take large joy of one another, side by side, in cities.

There is good feeling and careful workmanship in Mr. John Freeman's "Fifty Poems." He can affect a tripping Herrickese manner, as in "The Haunted Shadow"—

> Fair trees, O keep from chattering so
> When I with my more Fair do go
> Beneath your branches—

These lines, we fancy, would have been "passed" by Edgar Poe, who took some small trouble to delimitate the confines of justifiable quaintness.

Mr. Charles Granville's "Poems" are not wholly to our liking, though we cordially sympathise with the lines on p. 58 entitled "After a Social Function." But it is a little hard on us oldsters to be told—

> At thirty-two those peaks are dull,
> Scarce worth the striving for;
> At forty-two you've sold your soul,
> And heights exist no more.
> Then up! enjoy the present time,
> The wine of life drink deep, etc.

Only wait, Mr. Granville;

> "Wait till you come to forty year . . ."

The "Wine of Life" and one or two other things ("The Vow," for instance) remind us of Lord de Tabley; but that noble bard was too keen and deferential an observer to choose a thrush, however grief-laden, as a fowl that "pours wondrous minor music from its throat." This lack of original research into nature is symptomatic of a certain class of modern poets.

The austere and chastened spirit of French neo-classicism dwells in Miss Jourdain's "Poems"; she is sensitive to the magic of Samain, the almost ascetic refinements of Leconte de Lisle, and whoever has tried to transfuse unimpaired such frail and illusive charms into the tormented setting of an English sonnet must admit that her verse-renderings are uncommonly *bien frappés*. We are glad that she has included in this collection the earlier study "Tithonus," for it illustrates the far advance of her recent development, and we would rejoice to think of her, now, as wrestling with Heredia—yes, nothing less than the whole of Heredia . . . What odds if a public fails to appreciate such labours! They cannot even relish simple fare like her admirable "Song of Solomon." But others can; and in these days,

when every Jack's a gentleman, it is only meet and proper, we think, that some inconspicuous badge should be discovered to mark him from the man of finer fibre.

Mr. Sidney Royse Lysaght's "Horizons and Landmarks" fall roughly into Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience; the first being the more convincing. They call up firm-seated memories of happy childhood rambles; seldom has that tangled nature-worship of children been more happily expressed than in the two lines:

> Earth had no secret that we could not share,
> For everything we saw and loved we were.

Then comes adolescence and its mark "The child is not the dreamer; but the youth"—with the inevitable and tender complications:

> Strife and confusion to our life she brought,
> But life itself in lovelier hues she wrought.

In "The Poet's Calendar and Other Verses" Miss Margaret Macdonald displays a consistent sense of propriety and measure. The "Song" on page 43, "The Dead Lover," "To the Winds of Spring" are far above what their titles might have led one to expect.

Unlike many of us, Mr. Charles Masefield is not altogether satisfied with what Richard Burton irreverently called divine "Provvy."

> Of all man's good is he the cause . . .
> And yet he taught the tiger-kind
> To rend with those so awful paws
> The velvet of the breeding hind.

Still, things are not quite as bad as they might be:

> And from the shadows struggling out
> I yet find this to lighten care:
> "Belief is better far than Doubt;
> Hope fashions men, but slaves Despair."

So be it. To acquiesce is certainly easier and more comfortable than to deny. And such being the case, we will let him have his way.

The poems entitled "The Blossomy Bough," by Shaemas O Sheel are written in America and sound rather fictitious and unreal, though one may gain some idea of the feverish hurry and scurry of New York City from the following:

> We do not see our Lord who bleeds
> Upon the cruel Tree;
> We're very busy here, and very
> Far from Calvary . . . . .
> We cannot stop to mourn our Lord
> Who died upon the Cross;
> Time spent in grief or service free
> Means loss.

In an autobiographical note, the minstrel regrets that he has never written "any worthy poems for Ireland, for my Catholic Faith, etc." To us, who are dazed and deafened with Ireland in every shape, this seems a peculiarly unseasonable lament. He is young and ambitious;

why not essay a greater theme, why not sweep loud the lyre and sing us, rather, a song of that great continent, his adopted home? Let him gaze at yonder flaming vision of anarchy and gold and then hold fast the spectral image as it floats waveringly before his mental retina; let him hearken to multifarious dins of corn-elevators, Wall-street slang and Niagara thunders and plaints of Red Men, resolving into melody their discords . . . . To coax all America into a lucent and limpid Ode—were that not something new, at last, and a worthier task than hymning old Ireland with its musty and improbable buffoon-chieftains, its mythological patron-saint and all those other local curiosities which are even now in loving poetic hands?

"I have never practised poetic composition as so many do," he says, "by sitting down to write now a series of sonnets, now a dozen triolets or vilanelles, now a ballade; and I deeply believe that to practise in that way is harmful if not fatal." Is not that the "trouble," as Yankees say, with a goodly number of bards on this side of the water? Why not sing, if the heart be full? But they are apt to "disremember" that the joys and sorrows of poets are much the same as those of other folks who keep them locked in their own breasts, and that whoever insists upon laying bare his states of feeling for public inspection—quite an inoffensive and time-honoured form of exhibitionism—should endeavour first to clothe them in sober and attractive raiment.

With her little volume of "Poems" Mrs. Marna Pease contrives to fill our heated and artificial surroundings as with a breath of clean mountain air. There is a smack of Helicon in these clear-shining vignettes of North England scenery—its grave outlines of forest and heathery hill, its sturdy and simple home life.

The "Epic of God and the Devil," by Mr. John F. Rowbotham, is, in its more aspiring portions, a kind of "Paradise Lost" *fin-de-siècle*. The author has an enviable flow of rollicking verse, but his devil is not sufficiently Gothic, not sufficiently sulphureous, for our taste. In "The Devil on a Cattle-ship" and so forth, His Majesty is transmewed into an indifferent sei-cento ruffian; he becomes almost baroque. The poor mediæval devil! After all, he was the only gentleman of his age. And on that assumption, Mr. Rowbotham is perhaps right in detecting between him and Sir Victor Horsley a certain resemblance, which must be gratifying to both of them.

> But oh, my pen I can no more, no more.
> With horror steeped, I must give o'er.

And so must we.

The earlier parts of Mr. E. B. Sargant's "Casket Songs and Other Poems" have a fair hymeneal flavour. "Azalea Buds" we particularly like, while "The Cuckoo Wood" is a poetic effusion in the right sense of that word. In fact, Mr. Sargant is a poet by temperament—no very common product, at any time—and his outlook upon nature is suffused, on occasion, with the rainbow tints of a charming pantheism.

Mr. C. E. Smith's "Poems" are marred by that surprising insensibility to the incongruous which often affects the inspired child-mind.

Then 'twas that I who had of late
Been utterly disconsolate,
And sore distressed,
First noticed the excited state
Of my sad breast.

Or again

The halo round the silvery orb,
Which seemed to float across the sky,
My whole attention did absorb;
And as I looked, I wondered why.

Altogether, he is unduly interested in the earth's satellite—another sign of immaturity. No matter; the youthful Keats was likewise moonstruck. A third feature indicative of earlier stages of human development is that his verses bristle with allusions and invocations to the Deity—a trait that is characteristic of all too many bards, who have a veritable obsession on that subject. Now the Deity is all very well, but—*toujours perdrix!* Is there really so little else, in this twentieth century, to solace and enliven mankind? Judging by the signs of the times, our poets mean to keep up this particular form of anthropomorphism longer than our curates; and with far less right. For the mention of that sublime theme involves something of a moral generalisation; generalisations cannot arouse emotions like single images, and are therefore out of place where the awakening of emotions, as in lyrical poetry, is the primary object. But what care our songsters for such chill and captious reflections? Bless their hearts! They only want to relieve themselves, to sentimentalise.

MARIAMNE: IN FIVE ACTS. A CONFLICT. By T. STURGE MOORE. Duckworth. 2s. net.

A SICILIAN IDYLL: AND JUDITH, A CONFLICT. By T. STURGE MOORE. Duckworth. 2s. net.

Mr. Sturge Moore, if one may say so, has thrown out the word Conflict as a screen for criticism to be concerned with, while he works his own purposes behind it. For, minor distinctions apart, the essence of Drama is conflict. In fact, if the wider implications of the word Conflict be clearly seen, it is possible to say that the whole of Drama is conflict; since to the reality of conflict there must first be necessary a reality and truth and vitality of characterisation, the whole power of the final clash being brought about by the strength of individual personality behind it. Yet, were one to see a shadow-like opposition maintained by unreal and phantasmal appearances, it would still be possible to speak of the final result as a Conflict although it would be difficult to conceive of it as Drama. And it is this shadowed neutral ground that Mr. Sturge Moore chooses for the erection of these plays of his.

Consequently it is difficult to know what precise weapons in the critical armoury to pick down, whatever be the attitude of the critic, offence or defence. Mr. Sturge Moore, however, has thrown out an indication that provides a valuable clue to his procedure. For among these three plays is one that is not called a Conflict but an Idyll; and here, although the form be dramatic, the substance is clearly not dramatic at all but narrative. In fact, the dramatic form is an interference with the narrative that retards the interest and irritates the mind. Damon narrates while Cydilla interferes and questions; and we would gladly bid Cydilla, woman though she be, be quiet awhile and let Damon get on with his job. The form that Browning discovered in "The Ring and The Book" would far better have expressed this Idyll.

"Mariamne" could be acted. It would be admirable to see it acted; but not because Mariamne or Herod live before our eyes, rather because a conflict interests the mind, even though that conflict be static and not dynamic. There is no achievement in it; it all passes before our eyes. But since "Mariamne" is a long five-act play it seems to demand enacting on the stage, with great care as to scenic accessories in the manner of Mr. Cayley Robinson. Moreover it is the most noteworthy in its versification. There are fine passages in it, as when Herod says of Mariamne:—

> Her beauty blinds thee yet: but hate protrudes
> As thro' a soft life-nurturing woman's form
> Up slowly thrusts the cheerless skeleton.

Mr. Sturge Moore's verse is too languid and dreamy, it is not sufficiently paragraphic and vital, for great drama; but in "Mariamne" there are memorable passages as there are not in the later volume.

SOCIOLOGY

DAUGHTERS OF ISHMAEL. By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN. Stephen Swift. 6*s*.

It is a pity that American authors write, or rather write up, things in such lurid colours, but they will do it, and Mr. Kauffman uses the method in his otherwise perfectly serious work on prostitution with much the same effect as Upton Sinclair on pork packing. The result is a poor artistic achievement, a book that reads like a series of essays "to be continued" in our next, steeped in a pungent atmosphere of sin and misery which contrasted with the far greater sin and misery, say of Russia, and with the masterly treatment of it by such men as Turgenief, Gorki, etc., proves somewhat irritating. Indeed, as the subject is vitally important to mankind and symptomatic of our civilisation, it will be well to be quite honest and admit that with some of the author's assertions we do not agree. The various medical, French and German statistical reports of white slave houses show that the women confined there are not by any means mere prisoners, or even, on the whole, unhappy; nor do they

die within five years—killed off—but that many thrive on the life and not a few marry even after a decade of the existence. However, that is the obverse side, though all true would-be reformers should grasp that fact. Mr. Kauffman takes up whole-heartedly the dark side; shows us a girl forced by economic conditions into the snares of the "procureur," seduced, locked-up in a brothel: what her life is there, what foul traffic the New York police have with the keepers of such houses, what bribery, corruption and immorality exist among Americans, how the poor girl, pilloried after a few years of the "gay life" with disease, is cast out into the world, like a dead rat upon a dunghill. It is a terrible story and, no doubt, true, and the lot of many a girl who enters the life. From this point of view the book should be read. Particularly the account of the people who trade in women is worth reading. Nor is there anything coarse or offensively distressing in the work. It is a thoroughly moral book—a book, above all, that all serious women, notoriously ignorant about these matters, should read quietly and seriously. For the remedy lies with them. Men, civilisation, will not alter the scandal. Only by the collective action of women can women educate their unhappy sisters. The main thing is that women should be taught the facts of life, should know what an artificial civilisation carefully withholds from them. Mr. Kauffman has done right to state the case, and John Masefield writes the preface. We, as the Americans, need to get rid of our shamefaced attitude towards the ugly truths of life. This matter should be the first concern of the Eugenists, and it will be something done if the young learn what the "gay life" leads to and what horrors it involves.

ONE OF THE MULTITUDE. By GEORGE ACORN. Heinemann. 4*s*. 6*d*.

Here is a book which ought to make us pause and think. It is not a great book, it is a simple, direct, honest book, recounting without rhetoric or obvious literary art, the career of a slum-dweller from childhood to manhood, and his release from the jungle of what the Sociologists would call "primary poverty." "One of the Multitude" is, in a way, a piece of natural history, because it tells of the very poor and their ways as one might tell of another species, and the strange thing is that the teller is one of them, but he alone is conscious of the fact and thus desires another kind of life. The class of people described are those dependent upon casual and the lowest grades of skilled labour, like the making of cheap furniture; it is a class which perpetually alternates between sheer destitution and poverty; it is *poor* when most prosperous. Crime and cruelty and dirt mingle with forlorn attempts at decency of life, heroic economies, kindly acts which shine through a morass of brutality, and curiously snobbish attitudes which recall Brixton and Bayswater.

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